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Paul in Context: A Reinterpretation of Paul and Empire

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PAUL IN CONTEXT:

A REINTERPRETATION OF PAUL AND EMPIRE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

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BY

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acknowledge Hiroki Lory, my undergraduate research assistant, who in the summer of 2017 helped me complete my research for chapter four of this dissertation.

To my family, both on earth and those among the saints, I owe my greatest thanks. I wish to thank mother, who suggested that she struggled along with me during my PhD studies. She has been my strongest supporter. I also acknowledge the good thoughts and continued support of my brothers and their families. Finally, I will like to acknowledge my brother Walid, my father Munier, and my uncle Raymond who passed away during the duration of my PhD program. They are my constant inspiration. This dissertation, as the culmination of my PhD studies, is due to my family's love.

In memory of my brother, my father, and my uncle.
ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

Epigraphical and Papyrological Abbreviations

AGWR Ascough, Richard S., Philip A. Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook*. Berlin/Waco: de Gruyter/Baylor University Press, 2012.

CIL *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*, Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussicae editum. Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1863-1974.

CPJ *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum. Edited by Victor A. Tcherikover and Alexander Fuks. 3 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957-1964.*

GRA Kloppenborg, John S., Philip Harland, and Richard Ascough. *Greco-Roman Associations Texts, Translations, and Commentary*. BZNW 181. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011–. Vol.1. Attica, Central Greece, Macedona, Thrace (2011).

IBosp Struve, V. V., ed. *Corpus inscriptionum Regni Bosporani (CIRB): Korpus bosporskikh nadpisei*. Moskva and Leningrad: Nauka, 1965.

IEph Engelmann, H., H. Wankel, and R. Merkelbach. *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*. IGSK 11-17. Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1979-1984.

IG II² Kirchner, Johannes, ed. *Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno anteriores*. 4 vols. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1913–1940.

IG V/1 Kolbe, W., ed. *Inscriptiones Laconiae et Messeniae*, part 1. Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1913.

IG V/2 Von Gaertringen, F. Hiller. *Inscriptiones Graecae V. Inscriptiones Laconiae, Messeniae, Arcadiae,* fasc. 2. Berlin: Inscriptiones Arcadiae, 1913.

IGLAM Le Bas, Philippe, and William Henry Waddington. *Voyage archéologique en Grèce et en Asie Mineure, Tome III: Inscriptions grecques et latines recueillies en Asie Mineure*. Paris: Chez Firmin Didot Frères, 1870.

IGLSkythia II	Pippidi, D.M. *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris graecae et latinae: Volumen primum. Inscriptiones Histriae et Viciniae.* Inscriptiones Daciae et Scythiae Minoris Antiquae. Bucharest: Academiei Scientiarum Socialum et Politicarum Dacoromana, 1983.
IGRR	Cagnat, R.L., J.F. Toutain, V. Henry, and G.L. Lafaye, eds. *Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes.* 4 vols. Paris: E. Leroux, 1911–1927. Vol 1: (nos. 1–1518) ed. R.L. Cagnat, J.F. Toutain, and P. Jouguet (1911); Vol 2: never published; Vol 3: R. Cagnat and G. Lafaye (1906); Vol. 4: Asia (nos. 1–1764) ed. G. L. Lafaye (1927).
IGUR	Moretti, L. *Inscriptiones graecae urbis romae.* 4 vols. Studi Pubblicati dall'Istituto Italiano per la Storia Antica 17, 22, 28, 47. Rome: Istututo Italiano per la Storia Antica, 1968.
IKosPH	Hicks, E. L., and W. R. Paton. *The Inscriptions of Cos.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891.
ILS	Dessau, Hermann. *Inscriptiones latinae selectae.* 3 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1916. Repr. Dublin: Weidmann, 1974; repr. Chicago: Ares, 1979.
ISardBR	Buckler, W.H. and D.M. Robinson, eds. *Sardis.* VII, 1: *Greek and Latin Inscriptions.* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1932.
ISmyrna	Petzl, Georg, ed. *Die Inschriften von Smyrna.* IGSK 23-24/1-2. Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1982–1900. Vol. 1 (1982); Vol. 2.1 (1987); Vol 2.2 (1990).
NewDocs V1-5	Horsley, G. H. R. *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity.* North Ryde, Australia: Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1981-1989.
PH	Paton, W.R. and E.L. Hicks. *The Inscriptions of Cos.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891.
PMich	Boak, A.E.R. *Papyri from Tebtunis* (Michigan Papyri II and V), 2 vols. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1933-1944.
Res gest. divi Aug.	*Res Gestae Divi Augusti.* Translated by P.A. Brunt and J. M. Moore. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.
SEG	*Supplementum epigraphicum graecum.* Leiden: Brill, 1923–.

Syll³   Dittenberger, Wilhelm, Hiller von Gaertringen. *Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum*. Leipzig: apud S. Hirzelium, 1915-1924.

TAM   Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. *Tituli Asiae Minoris*. Wien: Hoelder, Pichler, Tempsky, 1901–. I: Ernst Kalinka, *Tituli Lyciae lingua Lycia conscripti* (1901); II/1–3: Ernst Kalinka, *Tituli Lyciae linguis Graeca et Latina conscripti*. 1 vols in 3 (1920–44); III: Rudolf Heberdey, ed. *Tituli Pisidiae linguis Graeca et Latina conscripti* (1941); IV: Friedrich Karl Dörner, and Maria-Barbara von Stritzky, eds. *Tituli Bithyniae linguis Graeca et Latina conscripti* (1978); V/1–2: Peter Herrmann, *Tituli Lydiae linguis graeca et latina conscripti* (1981, 1989).

TM   Trismegistos numbers for papyri.
             These numbers can be used
             at http://www.papyri.info/# or http://www.trismegistos.org.

CHAPTER ONE

STATE OF THE QUESTION

Introduction

Within the last few decades, there has been a surge of interest in Paul's relationship to the Roman Empire. In more recent history, recalling the work of Dieter Georgi, it has been suggested that Paul's preaching in Rome and in the eastern provinces critiques the Roman government.[1] Georgi's seminal study has led to several significant publications on this very subject, including three volumes of essays edited by Richard Horsley.[2] Taking a cue from Georgi, the essays in these edited volumes discuss political, socio-historical, and post-colonial readings of the letters of Paul. There is also discussion within a number of these essays of Paul's anti-imperial, and even subversive, agenda. Sometimes, they argue, these attitudes are manifested in plain sight and at other times, one must search for the *hidden* meaning within the text.

This chapter seeks to investigate the state of the question regarding the anti-imperial agenda in Paul. It will evaluate representative authors who hold the position that the letters of Paul contain an anti-imperial rhetoric. However, I will argue that many of these scholars, though

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[1] Dieter Georgi, *Theocracy in Paul's Praxis and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991). See also, Dieter Georgi, "Who is the True Prophet," *HTR* 79 (1986): 100–126.

[2] Richard Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in the Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997); Horsley, ed., *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretations: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000); Horsley, ed., *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004).

they make many worthwhile arguments, often argue from inadequate evidence with regard to Paul's anti-imperial agenda. Their evidence relies on a series of arguments which seem to build on unfounded notions in the Pauline letters. I will attempt to make the case that there is little positive evidence to support their claims.

This chapter will be divided into two sections. The first section will critically analyze arguments made for an anti-imperial agenda within Paul's undisputed letters.[3] Some political interpreters of Paul often locate direct challenges to Rome in Paul's letters. These challenges are characterized as Paul against the imperial cult, against the so-called "imperial gospel," against the patronage system, against the emperor, or a combination of them. Critically analyzing these anti-imperial arguments within the context of Paul's letters will show that an anti-imperial Pauline agenda is difficult to reconcile with what is found in his letters.

The second section will analyze two larger issues which appear in discussions of an anti-imperial agenda in Paul, namely, parallelism of terms and the notion of "hidden transcripts." Some political interpreters of Paul will locate terms found in the letters which mirror terms used by the Roman imperial authority in their descriptions of the emperor and empire. They argue that Paul intentionally used parallel terms in order to draw a distinction between Christ, the true

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[3] This section will be subdivided into arguments made for each of Paul's letters which have been directly evidenced toward an anti–imperial reading. The ordering of the subdivisions is in chronological order of Paul's writing. It should go without saying that the chronological order of Paul's letters is disputed. But I shall follow the consensus dating which places 1 Thessalonians as Paul's earliest letter and the letter to the Romans as the last one. It should be noted that the ordering has no significance to this chapter, but is only used for the sake of organization. For a discussion of Pauline chronology and authorship of the New Testament letters see, Stanley E. Porter, *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

"Lord," and Caesar, the imposter "Lord." Though parallel language may aid in our study of Paul, the argument that Paul incorporated parallel terminology to subvert Rome must be reevaluated.

"Hidden transcript" or "coded speech" is another argument some political interpreters appeal to make anti-imperial arguments. They suggest that Paul, for fear the Roman government may intercept his letters, described his anti-imperial agenda in coded language (e.g., 1 Thess 2:13–16, Phil 3, and Rom 13:1–7). In this way, his readers will know his true intention, leaving those outside the Pauline community oblivious to Paul's agenda. As it will be shown, however, the notion that Paul appealed to some kind of "coded speech" in his letters demands both historical and rhetorical evidence which some political interpreters are hard-pressed to find.

Anti-Imperial Agenda in Paul

1 Thessalonians

An account of Paul in Thessalonica is recounted in Acts 17:1–9. The author of Acts offers a strong impetus for an anti–imperial reading of 1 Thessalonians because of the Jewish response to Paul. Acts 17 recalls Paul's missionary journey to Thessalonica, where he preached the crucified and risen Christ to those in attendance. The author of Acts says that some of the Jews, as well as others in attendance, became believers. But "other Jews" became angry by Paul's successful mission and they made accusations against Paul and his community. When they could not find Paul, they brought a believer of Christ, Jason, before the authority. The accusations made against Jason before the politarchs (πολιτάρχας), on account of Paul's preaching, are "because these that

disturbed the world are also here … they are all defying the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus" (Acts 17:6b, 7b).[4]

Edwin A. Judge argues that the claim made against Jason before the politarchs, namely "defying the decrees of Caesar," probably refers to personal loyalty oaths made to the Caesarian house.[5] The loyalty oaths were administered by the provincial authorities, like the oath of loyalty from Paphos to Cyprus sworn to Tiberius on his assumption to power.[6] This oath included a pledge to serve, revere, and obey the emperor. Another oath in particular, which Judge gives special importance to, is the oath that the Paphlagonians swore to the emperor Augustus, which included a pledge to report and attack anyone who disregarded that oath (*IGR* III, 137).[7] This leads Judge to conclude that the Thessalonians could have treated the oaths as a "decree" of Caesar. Because Acts 17:8 says the accusations made against Jason incited the anger of the Thessalonian authority, Judge argues their anger is a result of their having sworn a loyalty oath to the emperor ("the decrees of Caesar"). The theory behind his interpretation of Acts 17 is to connect it to certain verses in 1 Thessalonians, linking the accusations made against Jason to Paul's preaching. Paul, he argues, "covertly" calls for a change of ruler (e.g. 1 Thess 2:3, 4, 5, 8; 4:16; 5:2–3). To call for a change of ruler is to ultimately inquire into predictions about the

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[4] All translations of the New Testament are mine, unless otherwise noted. The Greek text of the New Testament is from Nestle–Aland, *Novum Testametum Graece*, 28th edition.

[5] Edwin A. Judge, "The Decrees of Caesar at Thessalonica," *RTR* 1 (1971): 1–7.

[6] T. B. Mitford, "A Cypriot Oath of Allegiance to Tiberius," *JRS* 1 (1930): 75–79.

[7] Judge, "The Decrees of Caesar," 5–6.

Caesar's death, which was "prohibited by Caesarian edict." Hence, for Judge, Paul is defying the decrees of Caesar in 1 Thess.

Mikael Tellbe supports Judge's conclusion by arguing that the Thessalonians had a deep commitment to the imperial cult.[8] He finds that the accusations made against "the believers" in Acts 17:6–7 work in two fundamental ways which, he argues, will help our reading of 1 Thessalonians. First, Paul's urging of the Thessalonians to live peacefully (1 Thess 4:11–12) is a response to the accusation that the believers have disturbed the world (Acts 17:6). Second, the charge of proclaiming another king (Acts 17:7) is affirmed through Paul's distinct use of the title "Lord" (κύριος) coupled with a unique eschatology.[9] Tellbe's main line of argument for a Pauline anti-imperial agenda rests on Paul's use of specific "parallel" terminology, found in Roman imperial propaganda, which follows the features of the imperial cult prevalent in Thessalonica.[10]

Karl P. Donfried, as well as others, argues that Paul proclaimed the gospel in Thessalonica in direct opposition to the "imperial gospel."[11] They point to the prevalence of the

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[8] Mikael Tellbe, *Paul Between Synagogue and State: Christians, Jews, and Civic Authorities in 1 Thessalonians, Romans, and Philippians*, ConBNT 34 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2001).

[9] Ibid., 130.

[10] The issue of "parallelism" will be addressed later within this chapter.

[11] Karl P. Donfried, "The Imperial Cults of Thessalonica and Political Conflict in 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in the Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 215–223. Also Helmut Koester, "Imperial Ideology and Paul's Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians," in Horsley, *Paul and Empire*, 158–166; James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology*, WUNT 273 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); Craig Steven de Vos, *Church and Community*

imperial cult in Thessalonica as support for their argument. Part of their argument rests on the use of imperial terms which they identify in 1 Thessalonians such as "presence" (παρουσία), "meeting" (ἀπάντησις), "peace and security" (εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια), "savior" (σωτήρ), and "hope" (ἐλπίς). Donfried builds off Judge's hypothesis that the followers of Christ in Thessalonica were persecuted because of their refusal to take oaths of loyalty to the emperor. Paul attacked the "peace and security" (εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια) of the empire (1 Thess 5:3).[12] When Paul speaks of Satan hindering his visit to Thessalonica (1 Thess 2:18. cf., 1 Thess 3:5), it is possibly an indication of a strong political opposition which made a visit to the city extremely difficult.[13] Donfried takes his anti-imperial reading even further when he suggests the Thessalonian believers suffer martyrdom (2:14) on account of their refusal to take oaths of loyalty, making reference to the Paphlagonian oath of loyalty.[14] Therefore, they suffer persecution and, in some cases, death.

The apocalyptic language of 1 Thess 4:13–18 serves to support Donfried's conclusions. He says, "Paul attempts to assure the community that those who have died will not be forgotten and that those who are alive at the parousia will not have precedence."[15] For Donfried, Christian martyrdom is at the heart of the issue in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. He argues that oaths

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Conflicts: The Relationships of the Thessalonian, Corinthianian, and Philippian Churches with Their Wider Civic Communities, SBLDS 168 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999).

[12] Donfried, "The Imperial Cults," 217.

[13]Ibid., 219–220.

[14] Ibid., 222.

[15] Ibid., 223.

of loyalty, those which included rules for infractions of such oaths, were administered by the politarchs of Thessalonica (cf. Acts 17:1–9). Because Paul's preaching could have been perceived as politically inflammatory, his Thessalonian community was not only being persecuted but "occasionally" its members were being killed.[16] Donfried suggests that Paul is arguing that those believers who are martyred do not have precedence at the parousia over those believers who are still alive.[17]

Yet, Paul in 1 Thessalonians does not seem at all concerned with notions of martyrdom. Indeed, Paul is concerned with the fate of dead believers, but martyrdom is not the issue. The issue is the fate of believers who have died before the parousia. As Seyoon Kim observes, if Paul was addressing Christian martyrdom "he did a poor job with his argument that those martyrs would not suffer disadvantage over against the surviving believers at the *parousia* of the Lord Jesus."[18] Paul does not make clear that the martyrs would be rewarded at the eschaton by Christ, the true "Lord" (κύριος) and the true "savior" (σωτήρ), when Christ will return to lay waste to the Caesar, who is the false "Lord" (κύριος) and the false "savior" (σωτήρ).[19]

According to James R. Harrison, Paul's use of imperial terminology in 1 Thessalonians is set up directly in opposition to Augustus's *imperial gospel*.[20] Paul warned believers in no

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[16] Ibid., 216, 222.

[17] Ibid., 223.

[18] Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids, Mi.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 8.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 47–62, 88–95.

uncertain terms of the idolatry of the imperial cult (e.g. Rom 1:23; 1 Cor 8:5–6) and he

established Jesus's superiority over the "apotheosized Augustus" (1 Thess 4:13–5:10).[21] Harrison

also argues that the imperial terms Paul employs in his epistle were terms which were also

employed in Jewish apocalyptic texts.[22] He suggests that Paul is using Jewish apocalyptic

imagery intentionally to critique the "imperial eschatology and Augustan apotheosis

traditions."[23] Harrison concludes that, "the apostle was summoning his Gentile converts back to

the Jewish roots of their faith which had found its eschatological fulfillment in the house of

David and not in the house of the Caesars."[24] I agree with Kim that Harrison has a "strange

view."[25] He observes that 1 Thessalonians does not mention anything explicit about the Jewish

roots of the Christian faith, let alone an eschatological fulfillment of a Davidic prophecy.[26]

In response to Kim, Harrison argues that Kim overlooks 1 Thess 1:10, "his son from

heaven" (τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν) which he regards as a messianic reference to Jesus.[27]

But in other Pauline passages a reference to God's son emphasizes the close relationship between

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[21] Ibid., 95.

[22] Ibid., 51–56.

[23] Ibid., 86–90; quote on p. 89.

[24] Ibid., 69.

[25] Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 8.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Harrison does respond to Kim saying, "Kim has disagreed with my proposal, saying that Paul does not mention the house of David in 1 Thessalonians, preferring instead to emphasize the wrath of God coming upon the Jews (1 Thess 2:14–16). In each case, Kim's exegesis is somewhat selective. Inexplicably, Kim overlooks Paul's messianic reference to Jesus as the 'Son' from heaven (1 Thess 1:10: τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν)." See Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 69 n. 90.

God and Christ, namely, that Christ is the agent for bringing about eschatological salvation (cf., 1

Cor 15:24–28; Gal 2:20; 4:4–8; Rom 5:8–11; 8:3, 32).[28] Similarly, in 1 Thess 1:9–10 Paul is not

concerned with Davidic messianic references to Christ. Rather, he is concerned with the

eschatological implications associated with belief in Christ. Christ is God's son from heaven who

will rescue the Thessalonian believers, since they turned away from their "idols" (εἰδώλον) (1

Thess 1:9b; cf., 1 Thess 4:13–5:11).[29] Indeed, there is neither explicit mention of the Jewish roots

of the Thessalonian community nor any notion of Davidic prophecy. The only time Paul

mentions the Jews is in his condemnation of them for having "killed both the Lord Jesus and the

prophets," and because of their hostility toward the church (1 Thess 2:14–16). But his mention of

the Jews was not in relation to the Davidic household. Rather Paul made a comparison to them

being persecuted by their own kinsmen just like their "persecuted" (ἐκδιωξάντων) counterpart in

the Judean church.[30] Harrison makes a presumption with little evidence to support his

conclusion.

Like Donfried, Harrison argues that the eschatological language found in 1 Thess 4:13–

5:11 is setup in opposition to imperial authority. Paul, he says, is critiquing the imperial

propaganda of his day.[31] There is only one *epiphany* and one *parousia* for which the believers are

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[28] Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalornians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 86.

[29] Ibid. See also M. Eugene Boring, *I & II Thessaloians: A Commentary* (Lousiville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 68–69.

[30] Cf., Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 114–116.

[31] Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 62–63.

waiting. It is not that of the emperor but that of Christ.[32] Using imperial terms, Paul makes

apparent that Christ, not the emperor, is the true *Lord* and *Savior*. Like Donfried, however,

Harrison's reading of 1 Thessalonians is also problematic because Paul is arguing about the fate

of dead believers. He is also arguing that believers should not be anxious about the day of the

Lord. Paul says, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, even so God will bring them with

him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus" (1 Thess 4:14). He goes on to say how the Lord

will return to usher in the eschaton; with Christ's return he will bring about the resurrection of

the dead and "take up" (ἁρπαγησόμεθα) into the clouds all the believers who are still living (1

Thess 4:16–17). A larger point of the passage in 1 Thess 4:13–18 is that the living should not

grieve for their dead, because both the dead believers and the living believers will meet the Lord

at the *parousia*. The dead are not at a disadvantage; all believers will meet the Lord when he

returns.[33] It is difficult to conjecture that this passage is arguing against a Caesarian imperial

eschatology. Paul does not mention Caesar or the imperial authority at all. As I will argue, one

of the major reasons for assuming an anti-imperial rhetoric in 1 Thessalonians is because of the

so-called "prominence" of the imperial cult in Thessalonica.

Those who argue for an anti-imperial agenda in 1 Thessalonians often begin their

discussions by observing that the imperial cult flourished in Thessalonica. Many appeal to the

unpublished Th.D. dissertation of Holland Lee Hendrix, *Thessalonicans Honor Romans*.[34] They

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[32] Ibid., 59.

[33] Earl J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, SP 13, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 232.

[34] Holland Lee Hendrix, "Thessalonicans Honor Romans" (ThD diss., Harvard University, 1984).

conclude that because of the prominence of the imperial cult in Thessalonica, Paul's use of

specific terms, which are also used in the imperial cult, stands in direct opposition to the imperial

cult.[35] However, on the one hand, Hendrix does show that there was an imperial cult in

Thessalonica but on the other hand, he also makes it clear that because of scant evidence, it is

important to ascertain how and to what extent the imperial cult functioned in Thessalonica.[36]

Harrison argues that the imperial cult not only penetrated Thessalonica but that the

emperor Augustus's exercise of power was seen there as "Zeus-like."[37] He appeals to the coinage

of Thessalonica. After the ascendancy of Octavian, Thessalonica manufactured a series of coins

to honor Octavian. On one side of the coin, it showed the laureate head of Julius Caesar with the

legend "GOD" (ΘΕΟΣ).[38] On the reverse side, it was the bare head of Octavian with the legend

"THESSALONIAN AUGUST" (ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΕΩΝ ΘΕΙΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΥ).[39] Even though the title

"son of god" (θεοῦ υἱός) does not appear on the side with Octavian, the juxtaposition of the

Divine Julius with his adopted son may reflect the Thessalonian awareness of the emperor's

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[35] E.g., Tellbe, *Paul Between Synagogue and State*, 82–85; Neil Elliott, "Paul and the Politics of Empire" in Horsley, *Paul and Politics*, 17–39, p. 24; Donfried, "The Imperial Cults," in Horsley, *Paul and Empire*, 217; Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 55–56.

[36] Hendrix, Thessalonicans Honor Romans, 286.

[37] Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 56.

[38] Ibid., 170–172.

[39] Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 55. Cf. Hendrix notes "ΘΕ almost certainly is an abbreviation of ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΕΩΝ on analogy with the reverse inscriptions of the other series. If ΘΕΟΣ or ΘΕΟΥ were intended, there seems to be no reason for not fully rendering the word as it appears on the obverse." Hendrix, Thessalonicans Honor Romans, 170 n.2.

divine status.[40] This may indicate that the Thessalonians recognized the divine status of Octavian as the "son of a god" (*divi filius*).

With respect to the imperial cult, one must recognize that the imperial cult was not a monolithic phenomenon across the Roman Empire. What does it mean when we claim that an imperial cult existed in Thessalonica? One cannot make the assumption that "imperial cult" is comparable to, for example, the cult of Zeus. Hendrix suggests, from the archaeological evidence recovered, that there are neither altars for Julius nor Augustus in Thessalonica, or any evidence of honors beyond that which appear on coinage and in the games.[41] At the temples of the emperors at Gytheum and at Ephesus, sacrifices were not offered to the emperor but were made on their behalf for the continuance of their rule.[42] If the temples at Thessalonica were not used for worship or some kind of sacrifice, what was their function? Hendrix suggests

> It was constructed *not* to honor Julius, but Augustus. In effect, the temple was an honorific monument. Reverence for the divine Julius and sensitivity to the importance of Octavian attached to his relation to the deified forbear suggested perhaps the specific form of the monument at Thessalonica and in other Greek cities, but the act itself was essentially that of a civic honorific. As such, it was an extension of Thessalonica's earlier policies of monumental recognition for distinguished Romans whose benefactions were important for the city.[43]

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[40] Hendrix, "Thessalonicans Honor Romans," 170.

[41] Ibid., 296.

[42] Ibid., 297–298. See especially 298 n.1.

[43] Ibid., 298–299.

Though there was a priest associated with the temple of Caesar in Thessalonica, the responsibilities of the priest seem to be of an honorific quality.[44] At the heart of the matter was the forging of a link, through the priest, to imperial benefaction. Hendrix concludes that the religious categories of divine royalty which were associated with the emperors were articulated in the context of the city's honorific traditions. They were also articulated "according to a hierarchy of benefaction extending from the gods to the emperors and Roman patrons to the citizens of Thessalonica."[45]

During the Ptolemaic period, inscriptions highlight that dedications were made to a god on behalf of (ὑπέρ) the ruler or the ruling family.[46] During the Hellenistic period, sacrifices were more often made on behalf of the king to the god. Though in some instances we have sacrifices made to the ruler, they were made *to* him in thanksgiving for some kind of temporal benefit "he had bestowed on a city or institution, [yet] it is still clear [from the inscriptions] that they were essentially honorific."[47] These divine honors given to a ruler, which was a conventional way of showing the proper gratitude to those who made some kind of grand contribution to a particular people, was carried over into the Roman period.[48]

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[44] See the unique case of a Thracian client–ruler, Caesar Julius Rhoimetalces, who was both priest and *agonothete* of the Imperator at Thessalonica; Ibid., 312–316.

[45] Ibid., 318.

[46] Peter M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 1:190, 226.

[47] Duncan Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 1:37.

[48] Ibid., 46.

With regard to the Roman emperor, it appears that no one would say prayers or offer sacrifices to the living emperor in the hope of some kind of supernatural blessing.[49] It must be noted, however, that there is some ambiguity in a number of inscriptions where the relationship between the emperor and a god are blurred.[50] Nonetheless, inscriptions with vows shows that a vow is paid to a god while the dedication is to the emperor.[51] In a number of inscriptions (e.g., CIL 13, 4624 = ILS 3453; CIL 3, 5935), the god to whom the vow is paid is mentioned explicitly and the name of the emperor is associated in the dedication. In other words, the emperors are not treated as gods who, for example, answer prayers.[52] There is no unequivocal documentation of an ex-voto offering made to the emperor.[53] Ex-voto offerings were "made in recognition of supposed deliverance in some invisible manner from sickness or other peril. This we do not find

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[49] Arthur Darby Nock, "Deification and Julian," in *Arthur Darby Nock: Essays on Religion and the Ancient World,* ed. Zeph Stewart, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 2:833–846. This is true insofar as it regards sources contemporaneous with living emperors. Later sources, however, do attribute miracles to the apotheosized emperors. This is likely due to the growing popularity of the Jesus miracle tradition. See, Wendy Cotter, ed., *Miracles in Greco–Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook for the Study of New Testament Miracle Stories* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

[50] S.R.F. Price, *Rituals and Powers: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 215.

[51] Duncan Fishwick, "Votive Offerings to the Emperor?" *ZPE* 80 (1990): 121–130.

[52] Fishwick, "Votive Offerings," 126–127.

[53] No ex–voto offering was made to Augustus, or any other living emperor. Regarding the new honors given in response to Augustus's divinity, there was a senatorial decree that a libation be poured to his Genius at every banquet, both public and private. This coincides with Roman tradition of sacrifices to the Genius. The proper offering was not a sacrificial victim but flowers, incense, or unmixed wine. See Lily Ross Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (Middletown: American Philological Association, 1931), 150–153.

directed to rulers dead or living."[54] The lack of ex-voto offerings shows that the common people

did not regard the ruler as a god like the other gods.[55] Rulers were not thought of as having

supernatural powers and the lack of ex-voto offerings should not be surprising. This is not to

deny that homage was paid to the emperor, but rather a distinction should be made with regard to

how the emperor was *worshipped* and how, for example, Zeus was worshipped. Duncan

Fishwick concluded from his examinations of ancient inscriptions, the living emperor was not

seen as a personal god of saving or healing to whom a community would turn in times of crisis.[56]

An emperor could be associated with a god if an emperor performed some kind of magnificent

deed (e.g., some type of benefaction or conquering of a land), or was perceived to be endowed

with great beauty or strength reminiscent of a god.[57] Even after the emperors' death, however,

their divinity was never at the level of the Olympian gods.[58]

Many of the arguments for a Pauline anti-imperial rhetoric in 1 Thessalonians are based

on half true information. Indeed, the imperial cult was present in Thessalonica but that did not

entail understanding the living emperor in terms of a personal god or even as a personal *savior*.[59]

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[54] A.D. Nock, "Religious Developments from the Close of the Republic to the Death of Nero" in *Cambridge Ancient History* 14 vols., eds. S.A. Cook, F. E Adcock, and M.P. Charlesworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 10:465- 522, esp. 481. See also in Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 1:43

[55] Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 1:43.

[56] Fishwick, "Votive Offerings," 130.

[57] Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, 1:41.

[58] Fishwick, "Votive Offerings," 130.

[59] A number of inscriptions ascribe the term σωτήρ to Augustus. See, Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, 270–271, 272, 275. The terms σῴζω and σωτηρία have a number of meanings in the Hellenistic world. The action of "saving" or "being saved" could be used in a number of situations, for

Neither sacrifices nor ex-voto offerings were made to the living emperor. As Nock, Fishwick, and Hendrix observe sacrifices and ex-voto offerings were made to the gods on behalf of the emperor. The *divine* emperor was more of an honorific title and the lack of any ex-voto offerings and of prayer inscriptions to living emperors shows that the people understood the *divinity* of the emperor as honorific.

The argument being made by Tellbe, Donfried, and Harrison, in light of this evidence, would suggest that Paul is applying these parallel terms to Jesus in an honorific sense. For example, if Jesus is *divi filius* like Augustus, then this defeats the purpose of Paul's Christology. Augustus is *divi filius* because of Julius's divinity. For Paul, Christ is the son of God not because of mere relationship, but Christ is the God-Man who saved humanity from sin and death (e.g., Phil 2:5–11; Rom 8:1–4, 31–34). One can conclude that in Paul's letters, Jesus's divinity is beyond any honorific term(s). With regards to the emperor, the evidence shows that those ancient Greco-Romans understood to some degree that the divine honors given to the emperor were just that, namely, divine honors. Paul was not in competition with the imperial cult. Paul recognized both imperial authorities and ecclesial authorities as servants and ministers of God (e.g., 1 Cor 3:5; Rom 13:1–7; 15:16). Furthermore, Christ becomes a personal savior, unparalleled in the imperial cult, and he will bring those who have fallen asleep into eternal life (1 Thess 4:14). Paul

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example, when gods or men rescue others by force from danger. It can also have the connotation of being protected from danger or being cured from diseases. Also, being a *savior* does not suggest a superiority over the one who is being saved. In regards to the imperial cult Werner Foerster says, "When a kind of golden age seemed to come under and with Augustus, there was still no established link with σωτήρ … There is a whole set of examples to show that σωτήρ was not reserved exclusively for the emperor (e.g., Augustus) and that it did not necessarily imply the divinity of its bearer or the concept of a world ruler … it may be noted that the emperor is very seldom called σωτήρ or *conservator* or *salvator*. In emperor worship, then, σωτήρ is a form of the Greek σωτήρ extended by the range of Roman rule." Werner Foerster, "σῴζω, σωτηρία, κτλ," *TDNT* 7:965–1024. Quote on 1010–1011.

is not making any sort of comparison to the Roman emperor and to suggest that he does so by appeal to the imperial cult does not agree with the extant evidence. Therefore, to make appeal to the imperial cult, as does Tellbe, Donfried, and Harrison, to support an anti-imperial reading of 1 Thessalonians does not suffice.

<div align="center">1 Corinthians</div>

Political interpreters of Paul find an anti-imperial agenda most clearly in 1 Corinthians 2:6–8 and 15:24–28. These passages concern the eschaton, when the "rulers of this age" will pass away, and when "every rule and authority and power" will ultimately be destroyed. Richard Horsley understands these two passages as speaking directly against the Roman imperial powers.[60] Horsley understands the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ as the pivotal moment when all history was transformed. In apocalyptic terms and perspective, the Christ event has brought humanity to the imminent judgment and the "appointed time of fulfillment" drawing ever closer.[61] In other words, Horsley sees Paul's political agenda as quite apparent. One should "immediately notice" how politically Paul understands the events of "this age" and how the Christ event inaugurates the new age.[62] For Horsley, Paul is attempting to build up his Corinthian community to stand "over against the dominant society."[63] Paul is using a deliberative rhetoric in

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[60] Richard A. Horsley, "1 Corinthians: A Case Study of Paul's Assembly as an Alternative Society," in Horsley, *Paul and Empire*, 242–252; Richard A. Horsley, "Rhetoric and Empire – and 1 Corinthians," in Horsley, *Paul and Politics*, 72–102. See also Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

[61] Horsley, "1 Corinthians: A Case Study," 243.

[62] Ibid., 243–244.

[63] Ibid., 251.

ɪ Corinthians to persuade his community to stand in solidarity against the larger society; against

the imperial society, which he suggests is "the present evil age" (Gal ɪ:4), "the present form of

this world [that is] passing away" (ɪ Cor 7:3ɪ).[64]

Horsley suggests that Paul is arguing for his community to be fully independent and

autonomous from the Roman powers. He gathers that Paul's prohibition of eating foods

sacrificed to idols (εἰδωλοθύτων) acts as a means of the Corinthians' political-religious solidarity

against the dominant Roman society.[65] He suggests that those who share in the food sacrificed to

idols shared that food also with demons (1 Cor 10:14–22). These are the Greco-Roman social

bonds of sharing and for the Corinthians to withdraw from such social dimensions, Horsley

suggests, means to withdraw from the dominant imperial society.[66] Paul is insisting that the

Corinthian believers are now an exclusive alternative community to the dominant society.

He further illustrates this point by arguing that Paul, in refusing economic support from

the Corinthians (1 Cor 9), is directly assaulting the Greco-Roman patronage system.[67] The

Corinthians who were "examining" Paul "*must have*" had the patronage system in mind.[68]

Rather, Paul embodied the biblical visions of support which regarded God as a divine estate

owner and himself as the steward. Horsley says, "such imagery fits with similar controlling

metaphors, such as God as a monarch, Christ as the alternative emperor, and himself as the

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[64] Ibid., 25ɪ–252.

[65] Ibid., 247–249

[66] Ibid., 248.

[67] Ibid., 250.

[68] Ibid. Emphasis mine.

Lord's 'servant' or 'slave.'"[69] But what Horsley says about God reflects the incorporation of a

similar patronage system. Did Paul criticize one patronage system in exchange for another?

Horsley seems to be undermining his own argument.

Horsley's argument on idol worship and its relationship to the patronage system is very

difficult to argue for because of the lack of any explicit reference to the imperial powers which

he claims are apparent in 1 Cor 8–10. What seems to be at heart of 1 Cor 8–10 is Paul's

admonition to the believers in Corinth to live in light of their new calling in Christ and not to be

conformed to their former pagan ways of living. The false worship of the Corinthians is located

in the notion of false worship as improper practice and association (κοινωνία).[70] False worship

for Paul is anything that directs a believer's devotion away from Christ. In essence, Paul is not

concerned with the activity of the pagan political authorities but how idolatry is a danger to those

within the community.[71]

It is also not clear how Horsley derives an argument against the patronage system in 1

Cor 9.[72] It is more likely that 1 Cor 9 serves as further development of Paul's argument in 1 Cor

8, namely, that the strong should consider more than themselves in the overall concern for the

community and for Christ. Trent Rogers observes the argument in 1 Cor 9, writing, "The contrast

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Trent A. Rogers, *God and the Idols: Representations of God in 1 Corinthians 8–10*, WUNT 2/427 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 321.

[71] Ibid., 321–322.

[72] Many debates deal with the place of 1 Cor 9 in the schema of Paul's argument in 1 Cor 8–10. For a concise summary of the positions on 1 Cor 9, see Alex T. Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth: Jewish Background and Pauline Legacy*, JSNT 176 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 137–143.

is between Paul and the Strong, and can be summarized: for the sake of others, Paul does not exercise legitimate apostolic rights, and how much more then should the Strong be willing to sacrifice their pseudo-right."[73] There is no "economic" argument as Horsley thinks there is. Rather, as Rogers claims, the argument is for the strong to exercise their Christian rights (ἐξουσία) out of love (ἀγάπη), in order to not harm another believer's conscience (συνείδησις).[74]

Neil Elliott also argues the case for an anti-imperial reading of 1 Corinthians.[75] Elliott regards the crucifixion of Christ as "one of the most unequivocally political events recorded in the New Testament."[76] Elliott therefore understands the political turmoil around Christ's crucifixion as underscoring Paul's anti-imperial agenda in 1 Corinthians. The cross of Christ becomes that which has brought forth "the dissolution of the Roman order" and the Christ event must be understood as central to the anti-imperial rhetoric found throughout the letters of Paul, most especially in 1 Corinthians.[77]

Like Horsley, Elliott highlights the apocalyptic terminology suggesting that the Christian is no longer obligated to that which is of the world because it is ultimately passing away (1 Cor 7:31). Rather they are to obey God.[78] Elliott concludes,

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[73] Rogers, *Gods and Idols*, 259.

[74] Ibid., 259. For a fuller treatment of the argument, see pp. 231–257.

[75] Neil Elliott, "The Anti–Imperial Message of the Cross," in Horsley, *Paul and Empire*, 167–183.

[76] Ibid., 167.

[77] Ibid., 181.

[78] Ibid., 182.

Paul has not obscured the nature of the cross as historical and political oppression; rather he has focused it through the lens of Jewish apocalypticism. Only a gentile church unaccustomed to that perspective, and more familiar with the sacrificial logic of the blood cults, could have transformed Paul's message into a cult of atonement in Christ's blood (the letter to the Hebrews) and a charter of Israel's disfranchisement (the *Letter of Barnabas*). Paul's own letters show that he recognized these tendencies within the gentile church of his own day, and opposed them.[79]

It is difficult, however, to reconcile Elliott's conclusion with much of what is found in Paul's letters. Though this age is passing away, there is still value in this age which Paul expresses in cosmic terms rather than political. For Paul it is Christ's crucifixion and resurrection that have reshaped the world as he knew it (e.g., Rom 6:1–7; Gal 6:13–15). The emphasis seems to be that all things of this world, including the political realm, will pass away (1 Cor 7:31) and all that will remain is the new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). Furthermore, to emphasize a political meaning to the cross of Christ, by noticing only the instances of possible political meaning, as in 1 Cor 2:6–8 or 1 Cor 15:24, is to bypass the numerous references made to Christ's atoning death in the Pauline corpus (e.g., Rom 3:21–26; 4:24–25; 5:5–11; 8:3–4, 32; 14:15; 1 Cor 5:7–8; 6:20; 7:23; 8:11; 11:23–25; Gal 1:3–4; 2:19–20; 1 Thess 5:9–10).

To regard the Roman Empire as the only reality or manifestation of evil in Paul's letters, in reality, is not the case. That the Roman Empire is at center stage is never made apparent by Paul. If he mentions the Roman Empire, it is only in passing since all things of this age will ultimately pass away (1 Cor 15:24–25). But, more importantly, as we shall see, Paul's more fundamental foci are the cosmic enemies of humanity, which for him are sin and death (e.g.,

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[79] Ibid., 183.

Rom 3:9–20, 22b–23; 5:12–14, 21; 6:9–23; 7:4–13, 22–8:2; 8:2–17; 1 Cor 15:21–26, 54–56; Gal 2:16, 3:10–12, 21–22).[80]

Philippians

There are three passages in Philippians which are suggested to be key indications of Paul's anti-imperial agenda: Philippians 1:27; 2:5–11; 3:20–21. In Phil 1:27, Paul calls the Philippians to "live a life of citizenship" (πολιτεύεσθε). The translation of this imperative has long puzzled scholars, since this is the only place outside of Acts 23:1 where the term appears.[81] Nonetheless, the term carries the connotation that one participates dutifully in civic life being mindful of one's civic duties.[82] In his commentary on Philippians, Markus Bockmuehl suggests that Paul's use of πολιτεύεσθε acts in direct opposition to Rome and the emperor. Bockmuehl says, "Paul interposes a counter-citizenship whose capital and seat of power are not earthly but heavenly, whose guarantor is not Nero but Christ."[83] Bockmuehl understands Philippi to be under the direct patronage of "Lord Caesar" but Paul's community is first and foremost a colony of "Christ the Lord."[84]

The *Kenotic Hymn* of Phil 2:5–11 has led to several anti-imperial readings which suggests that this hymn is parodying encomia bestowed on the emperor. This highlights Christ as *Lord*

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[80] See a similar conclusion reached by Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 23.

[81] Lynn H. Cohick, "Philippians and Empire: Paul's Engagement with Imperialism and the Imperial Cult," in *Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies*, ed. Scot McKnight and J. B. Modica (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 166–182. See p. 171.

[82] Ibid., 171.

[83] Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, BNTC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 98.

[84] Ibid.

over and against the claims of the imperial cult. Bockmuehl understands this passage, at the very least the expression that "Jesus Christ is Lord," as standing in direct opposition to Caesar. One cannot proclaim "Christ is Lord," and" agree at the same time that "Caesar is Lord." "A Christian," says Bockmuehl, "is forbidden to render to other powers, or to require from them, the allegiance that belongs to Christ alone."[85]

Likewise, Gordon Fee understands this passage as placing "Christ in bold contrast to 'Lord Nero.'"[86] Fee wants to make a direct connection between Paul's apparent opposition to the emperor and with the prominence of the imperial cult, which he says plays a significant role in Philippi.[87] Peter Oakes, however, disagrees with Fee's suggestion and instead argues that Christians were a marginalized community in Philippi.[88] First, Oakes suggests that the imperial cult is not a concern in this letter. The Kenotic Hymn is emphasizing an ascendancy to imperial authority rather than an apotheosis. Furthermore, he says, "His [Christ's] enthronement prepares for his saving return in 3:20–21, which is like the action of a ruling emperor rather than a dead one who has been divinized."[89] Second, Oakes explains that the emperor is at the center of Greco-Roman society. But because of a marginalization of Christians at Philippi, pointing to Paul's imprisonment as evidence, Paul moves Christ to the center of authority, effectively

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[85] Ibid., 147.

[86] Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 197.

[87] Ibid., 197.

[88] Peter Oakes, "Re–mapping the Universe: Paul and the Emperor in 1 Thessalonians and Philippians," *JSNT* 21 (2005): 301–322. See 320.

[89] Ibid., 319.

replacing the emperor (2:6–11). Upon hearing that "Christ is Lord" the Philippian community would have recognized that Paul was replacing the emperor with Christ; that Christ's power has eclipsed the power of the emperor.[90] Insofar as a rhetoric of political subversion is concerned, Oakes rejects such a notion suggesting that Paul is not concerned with overthrowing Rome. Instead, Paul focuses on the plight of the marginalized Christians.[91]

N.T. Wright, who was Peter Oakes's dissertation director, uses Oakes' thesis about comparison between Christ and the emperor to support his conclusion of an anti-imperial rhetoric in Philippians.[92] Wright makes a distinction between the salvation offered by the emperor and the salvation offered by Christ. In Phil 2:12, Paul says, "Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always believed, not only in my presence only but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Wright says that Paul knows that the Philippians live in a world where there is 'salvation' offered. The salvation of the emperor can be achieved only if one lives by the rules of the empire and submits "to its lord."[93] Wright says, "[Paul] is urging them to recognize that, as they have a different lord, so they have a very different salvation, and they must, with fear and trembling, work out in practice what it means to live by this salvation rather than the one their culture is forcing upon them."[94] In other words,

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[90] Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 150.

[91] Oaks, "Re–mapping the Universe," 321.

[92] N. T. Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). For an evaluation of Wright's arguments see Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 13.

[93] Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, 73–74.

[94] Ibid., 74.

Wright sees a dueling ideology; a salvation offered by the empire over and against a salvation offered by Christ. The salvation offered by Rome is temporal. Wright explains that if there was a crisis in the city, the emperor would leave Rome to rescue and liberate his people, "transforming their situation from danger to safety."[95] But what Christ offers is eternal, a future saving activity. This is something the emperor cannot offer. Paul's message is set up directly against this temporal "imperial eschatology."[96] The Philippian community, as the faithful, will therefore choose the eternal salvation offered to them by Christ. Wright agrees with Oakes insofar as there is no anti-imperial rhetoric in Phil 2. But with respect to what he calls a "clear challenge to imperial ideology and eschatology" in Phil 3:20–21, the letter must be seen in terms of a challenge to the empire.[97]

The major evidence of an anti-imperial reading of Philippians appears to be in Phil 3:20. Paul says, "For our citizenship (πολίτευμα) exists in heaven, from which we eagerly await a savior (σωτῆρα), the Lord Jesus Christ." With regard to the term πολίτευμα, Wright argues that this is a coded message for those who are both Roman citizens and also believers in Christ to give up their status and privilege as Romans.[98] Using the Kenotic Hymn as a springboard for his hypothesis, Wright says that the critique of the Jews in Phil 3:2–11 should not be understood as a warning against Judaism but as a coded warning against the Caesar-cult. Wright says,

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[95] N. T. Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," in Horsley, *Paul and Politics*, 160–183. See p. 174.

[96] Ibid., 174.

[97] Ibid., 174.

[98] A more in–depth description of "coded messages" or "hidden transcripts" will be discussed later in this chapter.

His concern is to warn them against the Caesar-cult and the entire panoply of pagan empire. But his method of warning them, and of encouraging them to take a stand for the counterempire of Jesus, is given for the most part in code. He tells them his own story, the story of how he had abandoned his status and privileges in order to find the true status and privilege of one in Christ, and he encourages them to imitate him.[99]

The central argument for Wright is, therefore, Paul's call to the Philippians to be imitators of him. Paul had pride in his Judaism and it is this similar pride which the Philippians may have in their Roman status which could hinder them from understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ.[100] Their true πολίτευμα is in heaven, in the hereafter, and therefore must take seriously their new status as followers of Christ.

Another key term in Phil 3:20–21 is "savior" (σωτήρ).[101] Wright suggests that this term is the same term which is used to describe the Caesar. To describe Christ as "savior" is to suggest that Christ is the true emperor of the true empire. The gospel reveals that true citizenship is associated with Christ. Their only rescue from their struggles is the one true Lord and savior.[102] Others who also argue for an anti-imperial rhetoric in Paul often appeal to similar language to emphasize that Paul indirectly challenges the imperial cult.[103]

The anti-imperial readings of Philippians, however, have difficulties. The first is the overall dependence on what is termed *emperor worship*.[104] As noted earlier, to suggest that there

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[99] Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," 174–175.

[100] Ibid., 177.

[101] A more in–depth description on "parallelism" will be discussed later in this chapter.

[102] Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," 179. See also, Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, 73–74.

[103] Cohick, "Philippians and Empire," 172–173.

[104] Emphasis mine.

was "emperor worship" seems to say something to the reader, namely, that worship could be interpreted as offerings and sacrifices to the living emperor as to an Olympian god. This, however, is not the case. Benefaction in the imperial cult is the means by which a city would honor the living emperor. As Lynn Cohick shows, references to "emperor worship" seem to overlook this idea of honoring, even so far as to ignore other dimensions of honoring in the imperial cult. The imperial cult not only included the emperor but also included members of his family, as evidenced by Livia's deification declared by Claudius (cf., Suetonius, *Divus Claudius*, 11; Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 60.5.2; Seneca, *Apolocyntosis*, 9).[105] If Livia, the wife of Augustus, was honored in Philippi, that suggests that Paul could not be setting up a contrast between Caesar and Jesus since the imperial cult was more than just the emperor.[106]

With respect to the letter to the Philippians, to argue for an anti-imperial rhetoric based solely on a notion of hidden transcripts in Phil 3 stands in contrast to the letter as a whole. Paul, in the very beginning of the letter, proclaims that he is defending and proclaiming the gospel in his imprisonment (1:7). Furthermore, Paul is emboldened by his situation and does not encourage the Philippians to be quiet or act in secret. Rather, Paul's imprisonment served to advance the gospel among the "whole praetorian guard" and now those other followers of Jesus are likewise emboldened "to speak the word [of God] fearlessly" (1:13–14). It is clear that Paul's agenda is the preaching of the gospel, and he is not hesitant to proclaim it. To suggest that Paul employs a

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[105] See, Gertrude Grether, "Livia and the Roman Imperial Cult," *AJP* 67 (1946): 222–252; Anthony A. Barrett, *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), esp. 215–228.

[106] Cohick, "Philippians and Empire," 173–74.

hidden transcript is to contradict Paul's open stance as a preacher of the gospel, especially in this letter.

Considering this point, I would agree with commentators who suggest that Paul's use of πολιτεύεσθε in Phil 1:27 evokes a sense of commitment to the local community of believers. Paul is calling his community to live in a distinct way in which commitment to their community and the gospel comes first. Bockmuehl, despite his anti-imperial reading, shows that this verb in LXX texts and other Hellenistic Jewish texts connotes "a Jewish way of life."[107] In the examples referred to by Bockmuehl the verb connotes, "a deliberate, publicly visible, and (at least in a broad sense) *politically relevant* act which in the context is distinguished from alternative lifestyles that might have been chosen instead."[108] To reiterate, Paul is calling the Philippians to commit first to their community and the gospel. But in no sense does the use of πολιτεύεσθε undermine the Roman powers. The emphasis then is not an anti-imperial or subversive rhetoric. From the very outset of the letter, Paul informs the community what his major concern is, particularly, to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ.

<div align="center">Romans</div>

Neil Elliott is one of the more rigorous advocates for a political reading of the Letter to the Romans.[109] Elliot argues that the Letter to the Romans is "Paul's attempt to counteract the effects

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[107] See e.g., Esth 8:12p LXX; 2 Macc 6:1, 11:25; Josephus *Vita* 12. See also Acts 23:1. Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 97.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Neil Elliott, "Romans 13:1–7 in the Context of Imperial Propaganda," in *Paul and Empire*, ed. Richard Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1997), 184–205; Elliott, "Paul and the Politics of Empire," in *Paul and Politics*, ed. Richard Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2000), 17–39: Elliott, "The Apostle Paul's Self–Presentation as Anti–Imperial Performance," in Horsley, ed., *Paul and the Roman Imperial*

of imperial ideology within the Roman congregations."[110] He understands the Jews of Rome to be in a precarious situation following the expulsions under Tiberius (19 CE) and again under Claudius (49 CE). For this reason, Paul writes in an anti-imperial manner due to the anti-Jewish sentiments among the Roman intelligentsia which had seeped into the Christian congregations.[111] He argues that the gentile members of the early Christian communities adopted the ideological perspectives of the empire, understanding the Jewish Christians to be *weak* (Rom 14:1–2; 15:1); they are powerful while, somehow, the Jewish followers of Christ are "weak." Those gentile believers have even begun to confuse their status as being "in Christ" with a status that "imperial ideology promised them as participants in the civilization of wealth."[112] Romans is a "defiant indictment of the rampant injustice and impiety of the Roman 'golden age.'"[113] Paul is therefore concerned with counteracting the imperial ideologies which existed in the community. Paul writes for the sake of creating a new community, focused around "a more authentically Judean

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Order, 67–88: Elliott, "The Letter to the Romans," in *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testaments Writings*, ed. F.F. Segovia and R. S. Sugirtharajah (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 194–219; Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008); Elliott, "Blasphemed Among the Nations': Pursuing an Anti–Imperial 'Intertextuality' in Romans," in *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and C. D. Stanley, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 50 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 213–233; Elliott, "Paul's Political Christology: Samples from Romans," in *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation*, ed. K. Ehrensperger and J. B. Tucker, Library of New Testament Studies 428 (London: T & T Clark, 2010), 39−51.

[110] Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations*, 158.

[111] Elliott, "Romans 13:1–7," 190. See also Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint: and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*, JSNT 49 (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1990).

[112] Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations*, 158.

[113] Elliott, "Paul and the Politics of Empire," 37.

scriptural perspective."[114] This new community will ultimately challenge the ritual and ceremony of the empire through civility and solidarity.[115]

Like Elliott, N.T. Wright argues for an anti-imperial agenda in Romans. Wright locates an *inclusio* in Paul's letter to the Romans. It begins in Rom 1:3–4 and ends at Rom 15:12.[116] Wright finds in Rom 1:3–4 Paul's christological affirmation that Christ is not only the Jewish Messiah but fulfills messianic prophecies of being the one true King of the world.[117] The phrase "son of God" has overtones of Davidic messiahship and Wright sees Paul asserting that the resurrection of Jesus installed Jesus as the Messiah of Israel; this is Christ's "*euangelion.*"[118] Wright says,

> I propose that this reading of Rom 1:3–4, though always in fact exegetically the most likely, receives substantial support when we set it in the wider context of the realization that Paul's gospel was a royal proclamation aimed at challenging other royal proclamations.

Paul concludes the main body of his letter in Roman 15:12 with a quote from Isaiah 11:12, which refers to one from the "root of Jessie" who will rise to rule all the nations. The *inclusio* emphasizes Jesus's Davidic Messiahship in a very traditional sense of an earthly rule over all the kingdoms of the world in peace. The letter should therefore be read in this regard, over and against the Caesar.

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[114] Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations*, 158

[115] Elliott, "Paul and the Politics of Empire," 39.

[116] Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," 167–173.

[117] Ibid., 166. Cf. Ps 72:8; 80:11; 89:25–27; 1 Kings 4:21–24; Zech 9:10

[118] Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," 168.

Because of this *inclusio* Wright understands the terms of κύριος and δικαιοσύνη not only with regard to their Jewish (LXX) usage but also as a "pagan challenge" against the Roman imperial authority.[119] Paul referring to Christ as κύριος was a direct challenge to the lordship of Caesar. Because Caesar demanded worship (sacrifices) as well as "secular" obedience, he became the "supreme divinity" in the Greco-Roman world.[120] Not only was Caesar seen as divine, argues Wright, but as servant of the state he provided justice and peace "to the whole world." He was therefore declared "Lord and trusted Savior." This was the world in which Paul declared Jesus, "the Jewish Messiah," to be "Savior and Lord."[121]

Wright makes a similar argument for God's δικαιοσύνη in Romans. In Rom 1:16–17 Paul declares that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ). Wright understands δικαιοσύνη, like the term κύριος, in terms of Roman imperial ideology of justice as well as in the Jewish sense of covenant promises. He writes, "Paul was coming to Rome with the gospel message of Jesus the Jewish Messiah, the Lord of the world, claiming through this message God's justice was unveiled once and for all."[122] The gospel stood in direct opposition to the Roman imperial authority. Wright goes on to say, "Paul's declaration that the gospel of King Jesus reveals God's *dikaiosynē* must also be read as a deliberate laying down of a challenge to the imperial pretension. If justice is wanted, it will be found not in the *euaggelion* that announces

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[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid., 171.

Caesar as Lord but in the *euaggelion* of Jesus."[123] Ultimately, Wright sees the letter to the

Romans as a direct challenge to the Roman Empire. Paul sets up this letter in such a way, that he

is emphasizing that Jesus is the true Lord and that Caesar is not. Nevertheless, I will argue that

there is no apparent indication that Paul is laying down such a claim in Romans.

There are, however, significant problems with the positions of both Wright and Elliott.

The *inclusio* Wright finds in Romans is at odds with Paul in Romans 13:1–7. Wright argues that

the letter is written in direct opposition to the Roman imperial authority but Romans 13:1–7

affirms that Paul does not see any reason for resisting the authority of Rome. Even though he

proclaims Jesus to be the risen Lord (Rom 1:4) and a Messianic king (Rom 15:12), Paul calls on

the followers of Christ to respect and honor the authority (Rom 13:7). Though distinct, Rom 13:1–

7 exhibits parallels to what is found elsewhere in the letter, namely, the theme of conduct

towards outsiders (Rom 12:17–18), especially to be at peace with "all humanity" (πάντων

ἀνθρώπων).[124] With regard to Wright's *inclusio*, Paul is not speaking of the Messiah's political

reign but instead presents the Messiahship of Jesus in terms of eschatological acts of redemption

procured for humanity through Christ's death and resurrection (Rom 3:24–26; 4:25; 5:6–11; 8:3–

4, 32; 14:15).[125] Paul does not understand Jesus's Messiahship in a traditional Jewish sense of a

political reign over the nations. Rather, Paul understands Jesus's Messiahship in a transformed

sense of a "reign of redemption from the powers of sin and death" which can be seen across his

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[123] Ibid., 172.

[124] Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 396.

[125] Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 19. Cf. 1 Cor 5:7–8; 6:20; 7:23; 8:11; 11:23–25; 15:3–4; Gal 1:3–4; 2:19–20; 3:13–14; 1 Thess 5:9–10.

letters (e.g. Rom 3:9–20, 22b–23; 5:12–14, 21; 6:9–23; 7:4–13, 22–8:2; 8:2–17; 1 Cor 15:21–26, 54–56; Gal 2:16, 3:10–12, 21–22).[126]

In Wright's understanding of Paul's use of κύριος and δικαιοσύνη, namely that Paul uses these terms in direct opposition to the empire, are less than convincing. Seyoon Kim suggests,

> … why, then, being concerned to present God's righteousness in Christ as a challenge to the Roman imperial propaganda, Paul says nothing about the fake 'justice' of the Roman Empire or the parody character of the imperial *euangelion*, but concentrates his whole argument only on the sinfulness of all human beings (Gentiles and Jews) and their inability to achieve 'justification' by the works of the law.[127]

Paul writes to the followers of Christ in Rome to address certain misgivings about him and his gospel.[128] What seems to be at the heart of Romans is concern whether or not the observance of the Law of Moses justifies one before God. Furthermore, it would seem that many commentators agree that the purposes for Paul's writing the letter are varied but a great majority do not reckon a political, subversive, intention as one of them.[129]

In similar fashion, Elliott's argument of the letter being a "defiant indictment of the rampant injustice and impiety of the Roman 'golden age'" does not reflect the viewpoint we find in Romans. In each stage of his letter, Paul is dealing with issues which do not correlate to an

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., 17.

[128] Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts*, 99.

[129] For example, see, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011). For a contrasting view, see Robert Jewett who argues that Romans is an "anti–imperialist letter" which "compromises the antitheses of official propaganda about Rome's superior piety, justice, and honor." Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 2, 49.

attack on the Roman imperial authority. I agree with Thomas H. Tobin, who observes four major stages in Paul's overall argument in the letter (Rom 1:18–3:20; 3:21–4:25; 5:1–7:25; 8:1–11:36).[130] The arguments take shape in three stages: 1) an appeal to commonalities between him and the Roman followers of Christ; 2) Paul then develops the beliefs to support a central aspect of his gospel; 3) he shows how the controversial aspects of his gospel should be understood as acceptable and should not give way to certain misgivings about him or his gospel.[131] Where Rome's imperial authority figures into these arguments is not apparent. If the proposition of Paul's letter is that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God for all who believe, Jew and Greek (Rom 1:16–17), then a political reading of Romans seems to be a misreading.[132]

Parallelism and the Pauline "Hidden Transcripts"

The Reference of Parallels and Their Proper Use

Investigation in modern scholarship on the politics of Paul often begins with reference to the work of Adolf Deissmann who, in 1927, suggested that there is a "polemical parallelism" between the language of the cult of the ruler (Rome's emperor) and the cult of Christ. Deissmann argues that when the first followers of Jesus Christ began their missionary journey across the Greco-Roman world, they began using terms for Christ which were normally associated with the divine. Some words which Deissmann highlights as 'polemical parallelism' are "god" (θεός),

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[130] Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts*, 99.

[131] Ibid.

[132] For an in depth discussion on the structure of Romans see, Tobin *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts*, esp., 84–103.

"lord" (κύριος), "king" (βασιλεύς), and "savior" (σωτήρ).[133] Deissmann acknowledges, however, that Christian terms were derived "from the treasury of the Septuagint and the Gospels and happen to coincide with solemn concepts of the imperial cult which sound the same or similar."[134] He continues and writes, "I am sure that in certain cases a polemical intention against the cult of the emperor cannot be proved; but mere chance coincidences might later awaken a powerful sense of contrast in the mind of the people."[135] Deissmann, therefore, showed considerable restraint in his discussions on parallel language.

Samuel Sandmel, in his 1961 presidential addresses to the Society of Biblical Literature, warned against "parallelomania."[136] Sandmel defined *parallelomania* as the "extravagance among scholars which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying literary connection flowing in an inevitable or predetermined direction."[137] Sandmel is not denying the existence of parallels and their possible usefulness in interpreting a text; he is rather warning against exact parallels which can be devoid of meaning.[138] An example of "exact parallels" can be found in the work of Adolf Deissmann,

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[133]Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East : The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco–Roman World*, ed. Gustav Adolf Deissmann, New and completely rev. ed. with eighty–five illustrations from the latest German ed. (London; New York: Harper, 1927). See especially 338–378.

[134]Ibid., 342.

[135]Ibid., 342–343.

[136] Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13.

[137] Ibid., 1.

[138] Ibid., 7.

but he calls it "independent parallelism."[139] Independent parallelism (or "exact parallels") is when one finds a term or a phrase in a New Testament text which parallels a source from the greater Greco-Roman world. Deissmann uses the example of Paul's expression in 1 Cor 10:21, "the table of the Lord" with the analogous Egyptian expression, "the table of the Lord Serapis." As Deissmann explains, with regard to table-fellowship, Paul's expression was most probably influenced by Septuagint parallels (e.g., Mal 1:7. 12; Ezek 39:20; 44:16) than by anything to do with "the table of the Lord Serapis."[140] Nevertheless, Sandmel wants to emphasize context. For example, in what context is Paul using the term κύριος when referring to Jesus? With regard to Paul, Sandmel says that our knowledge of parallels may assist us in our understanding of Paul, "but if we make him mean only what the parallels mean, we are using the parallels in a way that can lead us to misunderstand Paul."[141]

Recalling Sandmel's presidential address to the SBL, N. T. Wright notes, correctly in my opinion, that some contributors to the edited volume by Richard Horsley have not abandoned the misleading method of *parallelomania*.[142] They understand the relationship between Rome and Paul as polemical and point to the common language which is used both by Paul and by Roman imperial propaganda. Yet how far removed is Wright himself from this phenomenon of *parallelomania* in some of his own interpretations of Paul? Wright finds numerous "echoes" of

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[139] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 351.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Sandmel, "Parallelomania," 5.

[142] Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," 162. In Horsley, *Paul and Politics*.

Roman imperial ideology in the terms Paul employs in his letters.[143] As previously noted, Wright understands the terms κύριος and δικαιοσύνη, especially in Romans, to stand in direct opposition to the Roman imperial authority.[144] Likewise in the letter to the Philippians, Wright understands the terms πολίτευμα and σωτήρ as standing against not only the citizenship which Rome offered but also against the "salvation" which was offered by the emperor.[145] These parallels, partly, lead Wright to conclude that Paul has deeply counter-imperial and subversive attitudes toward the Roman Empire.[146]

In his study on 1 and 2 Thessalonians, James R. Harrison contends that Paul's use of particular terminology in 1 Thessalonians is contrary to Augustus's imperial *gospel*.[147] Harrison locates in 1 and 2Thess the terms "presence" (παρουσία), "appearance" (ἐπιφάνεια) "meeting" (ἀπάντησις), "peace and security" (εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια), "savior" (σωτηρ), and "hope" (ἐλπίς), suggesting that these essential terms, which are used in imperial propaganda, is Paul's attempt to critique the empire intentionally. These terms appear in contexts dealing specifically with the

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[143] Wright draws on the work of R. B. Hays who lays out seven criteria for detecting Paul's use, or "echoes" of scripture in his letters. Wright, however, uses these criteria to hear "echoes of Caesar" alongside "echoes of scripture" in Paul's letter. See Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, 61–62. Cf., Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

[144] Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire,"168

[145] Ibid., 174–175.

[146] Wright says, "Paul's own self–understanding seeks of radical innovation from within a tradition, and of radical head–on confrontation with other traditions." Ibid., 162. See also Wight, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, 75–77.

[147] Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 47–62, 88–95.

emperor, for example the "παρουσία of the god Hadrian in Greece."[148] Paul, therefore, may be

using the term in the context of Christ's παρουσία at the eschaton (1 Thess 4:15–16), which points

to the "glory and pomp accompanying the advent of the heavenly *Imperator* …"[149] Similar

arguments are made for the other terms mentioned and Harrison concludes that there is "little

doubt" that in 1 Thessalonians Paul is critiquing the imperial propaganda and, subsequently,

imperial rule.[150]

John M. G. Barclay suggests that the relationship between Pauline terms and those terms

found in imperial propaganda are not as exact as others claim. Namely, the antithetical constructs

which they locate in Paul's letter. [151] The major question for Barclay is whether or not the

overlap of vocabulary implies a negative relationship between Paul and Rome. He observes that

the use of common language, political or religious, does not necessarily imply a hostile

relationship between two or more entities who use the same words.

Barclay shows how Paul can speak of ecclesial leaders as both διάκονοι and λειτουργοί

of God (1 Cor 3:5; Rom 15:16), as well as the political authorities as διάκονοι and λειτουργοί θεοῦ

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[148] Ibid., 57, n. 47.

[149] Ibid., 57–58.

[150] Ibid., 62. Helmut Koester makes a similar argument and reaches a similar conclusion about 1 Thess. Koester argues that Paul, by incorporating the "political" term παρουσία into the letter "envisions a role for the eschatological community that presents a utopian alternative to the prevailing eschatological ideology of Rome." See Koester, "Imperial Ideology and Paul's Eschatology in 1 Thessalonians," in Horsley, *Paul and Empire*, 158–166. Quote on 166.

[151] John M.G. Barclay, "Why the Roman Empire was Insignificant to Paul," in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*, WUNT 275 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 363–387. See especially, 376–379.

(Rom 13:4,6).[152] Neither claim challenges the other nor does it suggest that if Paul is a διάκονος

θεοῦ, that "Caesar is not."[153] With regard to the term κύριος Barclay says,

> In relation to Christological titles, precisely this sort of antithesis is present in 1 Cor 8:4–
> 6: whatever beings other people may honour as 'Lords' and 'Gods', 'for us there is one
> κύριος and one θεός' (1 Cor 8:6). Given this evidence it is no surprise that Paul does not
> refer to political authorities as κύριοι. But we know of his sensitivity regarding this title
> only because he explicitly marks this antithesis. This is not the case with regard to some
> other terms (διάκονος), and we cannot assume it to be the case elsewhere. Everything
> depends on precise analysis of the linguistic and rhetorical contexts in which such terms
> are used.[154]

Barclay makes a crucial observation with regard to parallel terminology. What is the precise

meaning of the term with respect to its linguistic and rhetorical contexts? As he demonstrated

with the term κύριος, if we merely think of Paul using the term to critique and undermine the

Caesar then we lose focus of how Paul really understands the term κύριος, as well as how he

understands the soteriological-eschatological function of Christ. For Paul, the main influence on

his thought being the LXX, κύριος, as well as θεός, is a title only reserved for the God of Israel.

Paul may not understand the emperor as κύριος or θεός on account of his Judaism but he can

understand him as διάκονος. What should guide our reading of Paul is foremost Paul's

Jewishness; he believed that Jesus was the unique Son of God, and his understanding of both

Jesus's Messiahship and also his gospel has precedence in the Jewish scriptures.[155] But to assume

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[152] Ibid., 376.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid., 377.

[155] Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 101–108.

Paul writes against Rome merely on the basis of common language is to lose focus on what Paul wants to convey and the Jewish context in which he is doing it.

Christopher Bryan makes similar observations with regard to the traps of *parallelomania*.[156] Bryan observes that Paul did not live in seclusion as he wrote his letters but wrote in the midst of a society which was heavily influenced by notions of the sacred. Bryan says, "They all had to use *some* vocabulary and concepts to speak of the things that they held sacred, and if they were to communicate at all, they all had to draw on more or less the same vocabulary and concepts as everyone else. Hence, there were bound to be parallels between them."[157]

Like Barclay, Bryan is arguing that one must be aware of linguistic and rhetorical contexts. Bryan convincingly argues to this point with regard to the phrase "son of God." He says,

> Romans spoke of living emperors as "son of god," "lord," and "savior." Paul and other Christians did the same for Jesus. Does it follow … that for Christians "to proclaim Jesus as Son of God was deliberately denying Caesar his highest title, and that to announce Jesus as Lord and Savior was calculated treason"? No, it does not. Certainly Christians were using some of the same words about Jesus as pagans used about Caesar, but they were hardly using them in the same context, or meaning anything like the same thing by them.[158]

Bryan then goes on to show the difference between Octavius's title as "son of God" and Jesus's title as "son of God." When Octavius was called *divi filius* it was because he was the son of the

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[156] Christopher Bryan, *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early Church, and the Roman Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 2005), 77–93.

[157] Ibid., 90.

[158] Ibid., 90–91.

divinized Julius, a title which demonstrated great honor and prestige that the Greco-Roman world had for both Julius and also Octavius.[159] But Paul, a Jew, believed Jesus to be "Son of God" because "he believed him to have been 'sent' in the fullness of time by the one God of Israel."[160] Paul understands Christ's sonship as deriving from Jewish traditions. How could Paul be countering Caesar when he speaks of Christ as "the son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me" (Gal 2:20) or that "God has sent the Spirit of his son in our hearts crying, 'Abba Father'" (Gal 4:6). Bryan says, "to suggest that at such moments as these Paul was concerned with denying something to Caesar is surely a spectacular example of placing the cart before the horse."[161]

Seyoon Kim also shows how *parallelomania* can lead to two further weaknesses in anti-imperial methodologies; deductions from assumptions and proof texting.[162] He argues that some political interpreters of Paul form a deductive argument starting from various assumptions: 1) the imperial cult was pervasive through all social and religious aspects in the Eastern Empire where Caesar was worshipped as lord and savior of the world. Therefore, worship of Christ as Lord and Savior was necessarily subversive toward the imperial cult.[163] 2) Paul, "an heir to Jewish apocalypticism," thought in terms of two ages, one passing (1 Cor 2:6) and the other, the new age

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[159] Ibid., 91. Cf. Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. 262–276.

[160] Bryan, *Render to Caesar*, 91.

[161] Ibid.

[162] I am indebted to the work of Seyoon Kim whose logic I closely follow with regards to his arguments on deductions from assumptions and proof–texting. See Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 30–32.

[163] Cf., Richard A. Horsley, introduction to *Paul and Empire*, 1–4, 10–24.

personified by the King of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.[164] 3) Because Jesus died by means of crucifixion ultimately administered by the Roman authority, his gospel, namely, the gospel of the crucified and resurrected Messiah – the Lord and the Savior of the world – already had an inherently anti-imperial character.[165] 4) Paul's use of the term ἐκκλησία already carried with it connotations of Greco-Roman civic assemblies. By using the term to designate his communities, Paul is attempting to set up an alternate community which stands against the Roman imperial system.[166] 5) The patronage system of benefaction was an integral part to the Roman imperial system. Paul's refusal to accept the patronage of the Corinthian community shows Paul's rejection of the imperial patronage system.[167] 6) Paul was often under investigation for his anti-imperial preaching and was also imprisoned on account of this appealing as witnessed in Acts 17:1–9.[168] If one takes these assumptions as fact, one could easily deduce from them that Paul's preaching included an anti-imperial, and even subversive, rhetoric.

Having made these assumptions, some political interpreters of Paul then look for terms in Paul's letters which parallel terms found in imperial propaganda (e.g. "Lord," "citizen," "savior," "gospel," "righteousness," "faith," "peace," "liberty," "hope," etc.). They then connect these terms with those assumptions, "so that the terms take on counter-imperial meanings, regardless

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[164] Horsley, "1 Corinthians: A Case Study" in Horsley, *Paul and Empire*, 242–252; Horsley, "Rhetoric and Empire," in Horsley, *Paul and Politics*, 72–102; Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, 40–58.

[165] Elliott, "The Anti–Imperial Message of the Cross," in Horsley, *Paul and Empire*, 167–183.

[166] Horsley, "1 Corinthians: A Case Study" in Horsley, *Paul and Empire*, 242–252.

[167] See e.g., Efrain Agosoto, "Patronage and Commendation, Imperial and Anti–Imperial," in Horsely, *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, 103–124.

[168] Kim, *Christ and Caesar*, 30–31.

of the contexts in which they appear. Then they read the counter-imperial meanings out of the whole passage, regardless of the chief concerns and intentions of the passage itself."[169] As Kim notes, some political interpreters of Paul are imposing counter-imperial meanings to these terms. The passages where these terms appear are then read as subversive. At times, these passages are then used to extrapolate the meaning of one passage to another, so that they may claim that Paul preached in a deliberate anti-imperial manner.[170] Because they read the assumptions as true they impose their assumptions on the parallel terms, thus fashioning an anti-imperial rhetoric in Paul.

Nevertheless, as it has been shown up to this point, parallel language does not necessarily imply a particular meaning. In this context, parallel language does not imply a Pauline anti-imperial agenda. Parallel language can, possibly, help inform a particular situation but one cannot come to conclusions without understanding linguistic and rhetorical contexts of the Pauline texts themselves. Those political interpreters of Paul who suggest that this parallel terminology *clearly* demonstrates Paul's anti-imperial agenda are basing their conclusions on a number of assumptions. They then impose political meaning not only on Paul's use of the term, but also to the larger passage and even to Paul's letter as a whole. However, an explicit anti-imperial interpretation of Paul with regard to parallel language has been shown to be problematic. Since it is difficult to elicit an anti-imperial rhetoric by appealing to parallel language in Paul, some political interpreters of Paul will often appeal to what has been called "hidden transcript" or "coded speech." We now turn to the argument for Pauline "hidden transcripts."

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[169] Ibid., 32.

[170] Ibid., 32.

The Presence of Hidden Transcripts and Recognizing Their Presence

It is argued that Paul could not openly declare an anti-imperial sentiment for fear of political repercussions. Therefore, Paul had to write in 'hidden transcripts.'[171] One of the earlier, if not earliest, mentions of a Pauline hidden transcript was Adolf Deissmann. Deissmann suggested that when Paul confesses Jesus Christ to be "the Lord," it acted as a "silent protest against other 'lords,' and against 'the lord'" who was Caesar.[172] Deissmann, on the basis of parallels, thought Paul made silent protests against Rome and Caesar. But he also showed restraint and does not press the issue any further.

The argument for Paul's use of hidden transcripts is often drawn from E.R. Goodenough's discussion of Philo's *De Somniis 2*.[173] *De Somniis 1–2* are part of a group of Philo's writings which are called the *Allegorical Commentaries*. These treatises were written for a group of people with extensive biblical and philosophical insight.[174] Drawing from the passage in *Somn.*, 2.81–92, Goodenough argues that Jews would have seen in this passage the Romans who Philo calls "beasts and asps."[175]

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[171] For further examples see: Mark D. Nanos, "The Inter– and Intra– Jewish Political context of Paul's Letter to the Galatians" in *Paul and Politics,* 146–159; Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica*.; William R. Herzog, II, "Dissembling, a Weapon of the Weak: The Case of Christ and Caesar in Mark 12:13–17 and Romans 13:1–7," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 21 (1994): 339–359.

[172] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 355.

[173] Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*, ed. Philo, 2d ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 55–57.

[174] Kenneth Schenck, *A Brief Guide to Philo* (Louisville, KY.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 17. See also Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*, 48.

[175] Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*, 57.

Throughout the work, Philo compared the harsh rulers to savage and deadly animals

(ἀγριώτεροι καὶ ἐπιβουλότεροι) but, at the same time, explicitly calls his readers to honor the

rulers. Goodenough draws from *Somn*. 2.91–92 which he suggests has a double meaning:

> And what? Are not we also, whenever we may be spending our time in the market-place,
> accustomed, on the one hand, to be astounded by the rulers and also, on the other hand, to
> be astounded by the pack-animals? But [we are astounded by these] because of different,
> and not the same, purposes; for, on the one hand, to those rulers out of honor and, on the
> other hand, the pack-animals on account of fear lest we are injured from them. And when
> occasion allows it, it is good to destroy by subjugation the violence of enemies; and to be
> safe, lest it is not permitted, be silent; but if we desire to find that same benefit from
> them, it is more appropriate to propitiate them (Philo, *Somn*. 2.91–92, my translation).[176]

Goodenough calls attention to Philo's sarcasm in this passage by comparing the rulers to the

pack-animals in the market-place. It was a reality that Jews in Alexandria lived with in the first

century CE. On the hand, both the ruler and the pack-animals are revered but, on the other hand,

that reverence is due to different reasons. Like the pack-animals, the rulers could crush those

who came in their way. If Philo's intentions in his writing were ever raised by the Romans, he

could easily deflect any criticism by insisting that he was speaking in general and not toward the

elite ruling class. But Goodenough highlights *Somn*. 2.91–92 saying, "And the Jews would also

have understood by the last sentence that if Philo had been able to destroy the Roman power he

would gladly have done so. The propitiating attitude he was advising was the only one a sensible

Jew … could take under the existing circumstances."[177] Indeed, if we were pressed to make an

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[176] "τί δέ; οὐχὶ καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅταν ἐν ἀγορᾷ διατρίβωμεν, εἰώθαμεν ἐξίστασθαι μὲν τοῖς ἄρχουσιν, ἐξίστασθαι δὲ καὶ τοῖς ὑποζυγίοις; ἀλλ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἐναντίας γνώμης καὶ οὐχὶ τῆς αὐτῆς· τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἄρχουσιν ἐν τιμῇ, τοῖς δὲ ὑποζυγίοις διὰ φόβον τοῦ μηδὲν ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν εἰς ἡμᾶς νεωτερισθῆναι. καὶ διδόντων μὲν τῶν καιρῶν ἐπιτιθεμένους τὴν τῶν ἐχθρῶν βίαν καλὸν καταλῦσαι, μὴ ἐπιτρεπόντων δὲ ἀσφαλὲς ἡσυχάσαι, βουλομένοις δέ τιν᾽ ὠφέλειαν εὑρίσκεσθαι παρ᾽ αὐτῶν ἁρμόττον τιθασεῦσαι" (Philo, *De Somniis* 2.91–92).

[177] Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*, 57.

assumption, one could locate here in Philo a hidden transcript. Goodenough does not depend on parallel language to make his argument, that is, parallel language found between Philo and Alexandrian imperial propaganda. He argues, however, from Philo's use of rhetoric.[178] Whether or not a hidden transcript can be located in Philo is not our concern, however, Goodenough's methodology is relevant for this study.

Specifically, Goodenough's work is often appealed to when a discussion about Pauline hidden transcripts arises.[179] For instance, Neil Elliott, in his discussion on Pauline rhetoric, suggests that the "hidden transcripts" found in Philo's *Somn.* 2.81–92, present to us how Jewish intelligentsia reacted under Roman colonial pressures.[180] Elliott argues that Goodenough's work demonstrates that one should not expect to find in Paul or any of his Hellenistic Jewish contemporaries an "unequivocal 'pro-Roman' or 'anti-Roman' posture," but should look for the "traces of [Paul's] response to the pressures of Romanization."[181]

Elliott, as well as others, argue that Paul wrote in "hidden transcripts" or in "coded speech," lest the documents were intercepted by the authority who would in turn persecute Paul

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[178] See also Goodenough's interpretation of Philo's treatment of Joseph in *De Iosepho*. He locates Philo's intentions against Rome in what we could term as 'hidden transcript.' See, Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*, 60–62. See also, Goodenough, *The Politics of Philo Judaeus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938). For an argument against Goodenough's interpretation of *De Somniis* 2.81–92 see Arnaldo Momigliano, review of *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*, by E. R. Goodenough, *JRS* 34 (1944): 163–165. Also, Maren Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 6–7 n.18.

[179] E.g., Neil Elliott, "Paul and the Politics of Empire" in Horsley, *Paul and Politics*, 17–39; Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations*; Elliott, "Romans 13:1–7 in the Context of Imperial Propaganda," in Horsley, *Paul and Empire*, 184–204; Harris, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 28.

[180] Elliott, "Paul and the Politics of Empire," 33.

[181] Ibid.

and his communities.[182] Part of their argument for bolstering the proposition that Paul writes in

hidden transcripts rests on the work of sociologist James C. Scott.[183] In his analysis of public

transcripts, Scott argues that the public discourse of subordinate groups, which takes place in the

presence of the dominant group, will often contain a hidden message which only the subordinate

groups understand. In other words, the subordinate group presents a hidden message which goes

undetected by the dominant group. Scott calls this type of subordinate discourse "offstage" and

coins the term "hidden transcript." It is "offstage" because even though a discourse may be

public, the hidden transcript takes place "offstage," undetected by the dominant group.[184] Hidden

transcripts take place "offstage" and consists of "speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm,

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[182] See Elliott, "Disciplining the Hope of the Poor in Ancient Rome," in *Christian Origins*, vol. 1 of *A People's History of Christianity*, ed. R. Horsley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 177–197; Elliott, *Arrogance of Nations*, 36–37; Georgi, "God Turned Upside Down," in Horsley, *Paul and Empire*, 157; Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," in Horsley, *Paul and Politics*, 160–183. See also R. L. Parott, "Paul's Political Thought: Rom 13:1–7 in the Light of Hellenistic Political Thought" (PhD diss., The Claremont Graduate School, 1980), 126–155.

The notion that Rome was a police state, actively seeking to persecute dissenters, is much exaggerated. Indeed, prominent citizens and those in the public sphere had to be careful about what they said or did, but Rome did not actively seek out and prosecute dissenters. Even when voluntary associations came under the microscope of Julius Caesar and later Augustus, they did not monitor the communique of local associations since these small groups were highly incapable of subverting the authority of the Caesar. See Wendy Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law: State Restrictions on Voluntary Associations 60 BCE – 200 CE," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco–Roman World* ed., John S. Kloppenborg and S. G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 74–89.

[183] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); also Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). For an extensive and appreciative evaluation of Scott's work with regards to New Testament studies see Richard Horsley, ed., *Hidden Transcripts and the Arts of Resistance: Applying the Work of James C. Scott to Jesus and Paul* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004); Harris, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 29.

[184] Scott, *Domination*, 4.

contradict, or inflect what appears in public transcript."[185] Scott identities examples of "hidden

transcript" in codes, gossip, ritual, songs or euphemisms which take place on the public stage but

can be interpreted differently by different groups of people.[186] These types of discourse which

take place in the public eye are not the "hidden transcript" itself but they contain trace elements

of a larger polemic against those in power.

John Barclay, however, rightly warns against those who appeal to Scott's work for their

arguments for a Pauline anti-imperial agenda.[187] Scott's work rests on forms of public discourse

and public documents. Paul's letters are not public documents; they are not addressed to non-

believers and Paul does not anticipate his letters will be intercepted by the Roman authority.

Paul's letters are private documents written to a particular group(s) of believers. Barclay

comments, "There is every reason to think that we have here, in pure form, a Christian 'hidden

transcript' – that is, what they said among themselves 'offstage' in freedom and without fear."[188]

Rather than finding some kind of coded dialogue, we find the full expression of what Paul

believes since this document is what Scott would consider "offstage." It is offstage because it

takes place in private, not on the public stage. Paul, then, speaks openly and in undisguised

language. So if these are Paul's undisguised words, then we find no openly subversive or anti-

imperial language. Paul does not make any direct comment against Rome's "gospel" or the

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[185] Ibid., 4–5.

[186] Ibid., 18–19, 136–182.

[187] I am indebted to the work of John M.G. Barclay whose critique of Pauline scholars who use Scott's work I closely follow. See Barclay, "Why the Roman Empire was Insignificant to Paul," 382–383.

[188] Ibid., 383.

Roman empire. In other words, Scott's analysis actually "argues directly *against* those who would regard Paul's letters as a coded discourse which masks what he or other early Christians really thought."[189]

Furthermore, Paul was a Jew and those of the Jewish faith openly and at length criticized Rome and its emperor. Why would Paul hide his belief that the emperor was neither God nor the son of God? Among other examples, Philo speaks at length against the Roman authority in his *Legatio ad Gaium* (e.g., *Legat.* 357) and his *In Flaccum*. Likewise, Josephus in his *Contra Apionem* criticizes the imperial cult saying:

> … our legislator – not as if he were prophesying that Roman authority should not be honored but because he disdained a means that is useful neither to God nor to human beings, and because an inanimate object is proved to be inferior to every animate creature, and much more to God – forbade the making of statues. He did not prohibit that good men be paid homage with other honors, secondary to God: with such expressions of respect we give glory to the emperors and to the Roman people (Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.75–76 [Barclay]).[190]

Though he cautiously criticizes the imperial cult he nonetheless still criticizes Rome. Both Josephus and Philo can write in their documents, which are generally understood to be public and were sometimes even presented to emperors, that they were genuinely dissatisfied and openly critical of some aspects of the Roman Empire and its practices.

Likewise, among the Alexandrian Greeks, there was open criticism of the Roman emperors for their apparent favor towards Alexandrian Jews.[191] The *Acts of the Alexandrian*

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[189] Ibid.

[190] Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion: Translation and Commentary*, ed. and trans. John M.G. Barclay (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 209–210.

[191] During the reign of the Emperor Augustus, a decree was issued which stripped Alexandria of their βουλή which meant that Alexandria could no longer function as an autonomous government within

Martyrs (*AAM*), the stories of Alexandrian Greek heroes who die at the hands of the emperors, are semi-literary documents based in some way on historical documents.[192] These heroes died because they sought to defend the rights of Alexandrian Greeks before the Caesars. In essence, the *Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs* were written primarily to ridicule the emperor.[193] One of the more outlandish criticisms of the Emperor Commodus (180–192 CE) can be found in the *Acta Appiani* (P.Yale.1536; P.Oxy.33). Appian, an Alexandrian gymnasiarch, is condemned to death (extant evidence is not clear as to why he is condemned). The text says that as he was being led away to suffer the death penalty, he was again called back to the chambers of the emperor. When Appian again appears before the emperor he says,

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the empire. There was also the introduction of the poll–tax, the λαογραφία. In Egypt, the λαογραφία was enforced on the native Egyptians, while Greeks and Jews were liable to pay either a reduced tax or pay no tax at all. The so–called βουλή Papyrus (PSI.1160), a document which describes a meeting between an Alexandrian Greek embassy and Augustus, demonstrates not only the frustration of the Alexandrians with their βουλή being taken away but also their frustration with Alexandrian Jews. The βουλή Papyrus has received considerable attention over the years because of the important information it reveals to us in regards to the whole Jewish question in Alexandria. Though "the Jews" are not directly mentioned in the document, scholars presume it is "the Jews" who are directly being mentioned by the embassy as "uncultured and civilized" and as "polluting" the pure Alexandrian society. The βουλή Papyrus shows how the Alexandrian embassy sought not only to reestablish their βουλή but, by reestablishing it, they would also enforce the λαογραφία for Rome. They also sought to cleanse their city of the "pollution" by not allowing outsiders into the gymnasia. Their request for a βουλή was subsequently denied though the request for the denial of outsiders entering the gymnasia was kept. See the βουλή Papyrus in Victor A. Tcherikover and Alexander Fuks, eds., *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957–1964), 2.25–29. Also Herbert Musurillo ed., *The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs*: *Acta Alexandrinorum* (New York: Arno Press, 1979). *Yet* as Sandra Gambetti notes, Augustus seems to reinstitute the same rights for the Jews which they had under the Ptolemies. See Gambetti, *The Alexandrian Riots of 38 CE: A Historical Reconstruction* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) 57–76.

[192] Tcherikover and Fuks, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, 2.55–107.

[193] Tcherikover and Fuks say, "There is far more political and literary fiction in the *AAM* than historical truth … It was not 'classic' work, whose existence was perpetuated by careful copies made by skilled scribes, but a work of no great value circulated in private copies; thus it was possible for anyone to change the text … according to his taste or to purpose for which he was copying. See Ibid., 2.58–59.

> Who is it this time that called me back a second time as I was about to greet Death again and those who died before …? Was it the Senate or you, the leader of gangsters (ὁ λήσταρχος)?[194]

Appian was again led to his death, in part, on account of his name-calling the emperor "the leader of gangsters" (ὁ λήσταρχος). Though this collection of papyri dates from the late second and early third century CE, they represent an outcry against the emperor whom Alexandrian Greeks were quite displeased with for some time. If Tcherikover and Fuks are correct with regards to the private nature of these documents, their distaste for the emperor is quite apparent in these "private transcripts."

What these documents represent, as well as the texts from Philo and Josephus, is that a public outcry or subtle denunciation of the emperor or imperial institutions is by no means done in secret. With regard to Paul, that he found it necessary to deride or even to try to subvert Rome's government in code lacks plausibility. If Paul spoke in code, then he broke the code when he openly admitted that some in the household of Caesar accepted the gospel (Phil 4:22)! Therefore, arguments for a Pauline "hidden transcript" seems to fall by the wayside.

In 1979, Hans Dieter Betz's published the seminal commentary on Paul's letter to the Galatians which secured the prominence of rhetorical criticism in Pauline studies for years to come.[195] While studies have argued for and against the Pauline "hidden transcript" none of those studies have adequately read Paul's documents with regard to ancient rhetorical devices. The notion that Paul has incorporated "coded speech" or "hidden transcripts" into his writings is related to the larger topic of "figured speech" in ancient texts. Figured speech is a rhetorical

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[194] Translation, slightly modified, in Ibid., 100–105.

[195] Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1979).

device that ancient authors or orators incorporated into their texts to signal a coded or hidden message. To suggest that Paul used hidden transcripts is to argue that he incorporated figured speech into his letters. I will attempt to show that Paul does not incorporate any of the rhetorical devices associated with figured speech into his letters in order to subvert Rome.

Conclusion

My review of the state of the question highlights several significant points for the investigation of Paul and the political. First, it has been shown that the imperial cult did not play such a significant role in the daily lives of ancient Greco-Romans. Indeed, as some political interpreters of Paul note, the imperial cult was quite widespread in the first-century CE. However, extant archaeological evidence shows that the emperors were never on a par with the Olympian gods. Furthermore, even though temples were constructed in honor of the living emperor, epigraphic evidence has shown that sacrifices were never offered to the emperor. Rather, victims were offered on the emperor's behalf to a god, for his continued reign. Therefore, on account of this evidence, it is difficult to argue that Paul was competing against the imperial cult.

Second, it has been argued that a Pauline anti-imperial agenda rests on Paul's use of specific parallel terminology, found in Roman imperial propaganda, which Paul incorporates to undermine the religio-political authority. Some political interpreters of Paul argue that because Paul writes against Rome he declares Jesus Christ to be the true "Lord," the true "Savior," and the true "Son of God" despite what the imperial cult claims about the Caesar. As I have argued, however, one must account for Paul's Hellenistic Jewish background. Paul preached Christ whom he understood to be the fulfillment of the Jewish scriptures (Rom 10:4). He used and understood the terms he incorporated into his letter primarily in the context of the LXX.

Moreover, if Paul preached in a Greco-Roman society it should come as no surprise that certain terms used in Greco-Roman society to describe the sacred were also employed by Paul.

The final point is the argument for the presence of hidden transcripts in Paul's letters. Some political interpreters suggest that Paul could not openly declare the gospel for fear of persecution and, therefore, wrote in hidden transcripts to avoid detection by the imperial authority. Yet, as I have argued, a hidden transcript in Paul's letters does not seem fit the bill. Because Paul's letters were private documents, namely, letters written to believers about the gospel of Jesus Christ, then it would not be necessary to incorporate figured speech into his writings. As previously mentioned, if Paul spoke in code then he broke the code when he openly admitted that some in the household of Caesar accepted the gospel (Phil 4:22).

The argument of this dissertation is ultimately to understand Paul within his socio-historical context and how that context falls into place with regard to his theology. This dissertation, therefore, will proceed in the following manner: Chapter Two will investigate the rhetorical device known as figured speech. What I will attempt to show is that Paul does not incorporate any of the rhetorical devices associated with figured speech into his letters in order to subvert Roman power.

Then, moving away from a rhetorical-critical examination of the letters, Chapter Three will seek to place Paul within the larger context of the Eastern Roman Empire. How did the Eastern Empire function in the first-century CE and in what ways is this significant to Paul and his communities?

Chapter Four will seek to understand how Paul understood his communities and their function in the midst of the Eastern Empire. This chapter will also show how Paul's "churches"

functioned similarly to Greco-Roman voluntary associations, and the significance of how his

"churches" differed from the voluntary association. One of the more important differences is

how Christians were to practice their faith. In this regard, the Christian groups were exclusive in

a way that others were not. In order to be included you must be "baptized into Christ." Once

baptized, the Christian is to practice and live out their faith. It is a call to "live by the Spirit"

(e.g., Gal 5:16–25). The Christian associations seems to be calling for a type of "resocialization"

within the wider Greco-Roman world. They required that their members' primary allegiance be

to the community, something that other associations did not do. We will ask the question of what

it means for these followers of Christ to be "re-socialized" in the context of their social

environment.

Having put aside an overtly political interpretation, Chapter Five will seek to understand

Paul's eschatological and soteriological understanding of the world in terms of cosmology and

anthropology. As we shall see, Paul's language of "world" (κόσμος) and "creation" (κτίσις)

impinges upon Paul's relationship with the Roman Empire. Paul's statement embraces both a

new anthropology and a new cosmology which are intrinsically linked to the Christ event. The

Christ event is central to this concept of "newness" and Paul says that he can only boast "in the

cross of our Lord" (Gal 6:14). The cross is what leads to this "new creation" (Gal 6:15). Paul's

enemies are also not of this world. In Rom 8, which takes up the framework found in 1 Cor 15,

Paul preaches deliverance or vindication not over human enemies but over the cosmic forces of

death and decay (cf., Rom 8–11).[196] Therefore, as we shall see, Paul was not primarily concerned

with the Roman Empire. In fact, the Roman Empire seems to play little explicit role in Paul's

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[196] Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts*, 292.

letters. Paul is more concerned with his eschatological soteriology; the gospel of Jesus Christ and how it has reshaped the world.

CHAPTER TWO

FIGURED SPEECH AND PAULINE RHETORIC

Introduction

Some postcolonial interpreters of Paul find "hidden transcripts" or "coded speech" in Paul's letters which they use to support their anti-imperial readings. The notion that Paul incorporated "coded speech" into his letters is part of a larger discussion surrounding the use of the rhetorical device known as *figured speech*. The purpose, therefore, of this chapter is twofold. In the first section, I will explain at length figured speech, its different types and methods of use, as discussed in ancient rhetorical handbooks. Part of this section will also detail the methods for creating and detecting figured speech. In the second section, I will examine the most important texts which some postcolonial interpreters of Paul appeal to in their arguments for Pauline hidden transcripts (1 Thess 2:13-16; Phil 3; Rom 13:1-7). I shall argue that Paul does not incorporate any of the rhetorical devices associated with figured speech in these passages. Furthermore, I will attempt to show that Paul is not concerned with the Roman Empire in these passages. Paul is concerned rather with the gospel he preaches. As we shall see, to understand those passages, one must understand them in the wider context of their respective letters and try not to separate Paul from Paul's place in Judaism.

Defining and Understanding Figured Speech

What is Figured Speech? A General Definition

The rhetorical device commonly referred to as *figured speech* (ἐσχηματισμένος ἐν λόγῳ or

figura) was taken up by several ancient rhetoricians.[1] Figured speech is a rhetorical device which

seeks to communicate a covert message to the audience. This covert message is conveyed in

several ways, but the circumstances and the strategies for creating figured speech will be

discussed later in this chapter. With regard to the ancient rhetoricians who describe this

rhetorical device, Pseudo-Dionysius suggests that figured speech can be used in the three types

of rhetoric: deliberative, judicial, and epideictic (*Ars Rhetorica* 8.298.4-5).[2] The *Rhetorica ad*

Herennium says that *significatio* "is the figure which leaves more to be suspected than has been

actually asserted" (4.53.67 [Caplan, LCL]). Quintilian defines figured speech in a similar way as

"saying one thing and meaning another" (*Inst.* 9.1.29 [Butler, LCL]. Quintilian also notes that

figured speech is not easily detectable, which if it were, it would mean it was never *covert* to

begin with. Quintilian says "… if a figure is perfectly obvious, it ceases to be a figure" (*Inst.*

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[1] I am indebted to the work of Jason A. Whitlark, whose discussion of figured speech I closely
follow. Whitlark's analysis of figured speech, to my knowledge, is the most recent discussion on this
topic. See Jason A. Whitlark, *Resisting Empire: Rethinking the Purpose of the Letter to "The Hebrews,"*
(London: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, 2014), 21-48. Whitlark notes that the Greek phrase ἐσχηματισμένος ἐν
λόγῳ is found in Ps.-Demetrius (*Eloc.* 5.287), Ps.-Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ars Rhetorica* 8-9), and
Ps.-Hermogenes (*On Invention* 4.11). The Latin rhetorical term (*significatio*) as well as the Greek σχήματα
appears in Quintilian (*Inst.* 9.1.1). Figured speech is also referred to as *significatio* in *Rhet. Her.* 4.53.57.
See Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 21 n.1.

[2] The Greek text of *Ars Rhetorica* consulted and refered to is from Ps.-Dionigi di Alicarnasso, *I
discorsi fiurati I e II* (*Ars Rhet. VIII e IX Us. Rad*): *Introduzione, Traduzione e Commento a cura di
Stefano Dentice di Acadia*, trans. Stefano Dentice di Acadia (Pisa: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2010). See also
Hermann Usener and Ludwig Radermacher, eds., *Dionnysii Halicarnasei quae exstant,* vol. 6;
Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanorum teubneriana (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1967-1985).

9.2.69 [Butler, LCL]). Simply speaking, figured speech should not be readily detectable but the speech itself, nonetheless, hints at another meaning. Figured speech creates a tacit understanding between the speaker and the audience.

Types of Figured Speech

Pseudo Hermogenes in his *De inv.,* could distinguish three basic types of figured speech or τὰ ἐσχηματισμένα προβλήματα: (1) ἔμφασις – implied meaning, (2) πλάγιον – deflection, and (3) ἐναντίον – saying the opposite (4.13.205-206).[3] Ps.-Dionysius also recognized these three types of figured speaking, though he never uses the term ἔμφασις, in *Ars Rhet.* 8.295.15-296.5.[4] Ps.-Dionysius mentions three more types of figured speaking (297.18-23) but they are dependent on the main categories, which we understand as ἔμφασις, πλάγιον, and ἐναντίον.[5]

Even though there are three types of figured speech, the primary focus for this chapter will be on ἔμφασις. Some postcolonial interpreters of Paul argue that Paul used figured speech to speak subversively against the empire lest he or his communities incur imperial censure. As we will see, ἔμφασις is incorporated into speeches or letters when one cannot speak openly out of fear. Though not directly cited by these post-colonial interpretations, they ultimately argue that

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[3] Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 23. The Greek text used and consulted and referenced for Ps.-Hermogenes' *Invention* and *Method* is from George A. Kennedy trans., *Invention and Method: Two Rhetorical Treatises from the Hermogenic Corpus* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005).

[4] Malcolm Heath, "Pseudo-Dionysius 'Art of Rhetoric' 8-11: Figured Speech, Declamation, and criticism," *AJP* 124 (2003): 81-105, 82. See also Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 23 n. 8.

[5] Cf. D. A. Russell, "Figured Speeches: 'Dionysius,' Art of Rhetoric VIII-IX" in *The Orator in Action and Theory in Greece and Rome: Essays in Honor of George A. Kennedy*, ed. Cecil W. Wooten (Brill: Leiden, 2001), 156-168.

Paul incorporated ἔμφασις into his letters. We will therefore proceed to discuss figured speech both generally and more specifically focus on the category of ἔμφασις.

Understanding Ἔμφασις

In the strictest sense, ἔμφασις (*implied meaning*)[6] "as a word-trope expresses the more precise meaning of something by means of a less precise semantic content."[7] Ps. -Dionysius explains what he considers the first-type of figured speech, which should be understood as a description of ἔμφασις. He explains that this first category of figured speech is when a speaker says what he means but with propriety (εὐπρέπεια), out of respect for his opponent, or out of caution with respect to the audience (ἀσφάλεια) (*Ars Rhet. 8*.295.18f).[8] Quintilian says of ἔμφασις,

> Again, what would eloquence do if deprived of the artifices of amplification and its opposite? Of which the first required the gift of signifying more than we say, that is *implied meaning* [ἔμφασιν], together with exaggeration and overstatement of the truth, while the latter requires the power to diminish and palliate (*Inst*. 9.2.3 [Butler, LCL]).[9]

In other words, Quintilian states that ἔμφασις is when someone says one thing but by means of exaggeration or understatement means something else.

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[6] Though there are other ways of translating ἔμφασις, in these contexts "implied meaning" best captures the meaning of this term.

[7] Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, eds. David E. Orton and R. Dean Anderson, trans. Matthew T. Bliss et al. (Brill: Leiden, 1998), 407.

[8] Heath, "Pseudo-Dionysius," 82. Also Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 23.

[9] Slightly modified translation.

With regard to ἔμφασις and propriety (εὐπρέπειας), Demetrius, in his *De Elocutione*, draws on the example from Plato's *Phaedo* (*Eloc*. 5.298).[10] In *Phaedo* 59B-C, Plato wishes to reproach the friends of Socrates, Aristippus and Cleombrotus. In this dialogue, Phaedo is narrating the imprisonment and death of Socrates to his friend Echecrates. At one point, Echecrates asks who visited Socrates in prison. After recounting all those who were present, one by one, much too Echecrates' surprise he did not hear of Aristippus or Cleombrotus being at the side of their master. Echecrates says to Phaedo, "What (τί δέ)? Were Aristippus and Cleombrotus there?" and Phaedo responds, "Certainly not (οὐ δῆτα). For they were said to be in Aegina" (Plato, *Phaed*. 59C [Fowler, LCL].[11] Aegina is less than thirty-miles from Athens. For them to be so close to Socrates and not at his side is quite embarrassing. As Demetrius says, "Everything that precedes owes its point to the words 'they were in Aegina.' The passage is all the more forcible because its point is conveyed by the fact itself and not by the speaker" (*Eloc*. 5.288). Though Plato wanted to convey his disappointment at Aristippus and Cleombrotus, he did so elegantly by means of a figure (σχῆμα).

Ἔμφασις can also be employed by using an obscure verbal imprecision whose more precise meaning is revealed by context clues which can have the effect of surprise.[12] Of this sort Quintilian says,

> Some, perhaps, may think that words which mean more than they actually say deserve mention in connexion with clearness, since they assist the understanding. I, however,

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[10] The Greek text consulted and referenced from *De Elocutione* is from W. Rhys Roberts trans., *Demetrius on Style* (Cambridge: University Press, 1902).

[11] Slightly modified translation.

[12] Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 262-263.

prefer to place *implied meaning* [ἔμφασιν] among the ornaments of oratory, since it does not make a thing intelligible, but merely more intelligible (*Inst*. 8.2.11 [Butler, LCL]).[13]

This form of figured speech is targeting the attentive listener (or reader) who can discover the orator's true intention by means of conjecture. Additionally, there are two types of ἔμφασις which are recognized: the first category is when something said means more than it says (explicitly), and the second type is when something said means something which is not actually said (Quin. *Inst*. 8.3.83).[14]

Quintilian lists two examples of this first type of ἔμφασις, the first from Homer's *Odyssey* and the second from Virgil's *Aeneid* (*Inst*. 8.3.83-84). In the *Odyssey* (11.473-538) Odysseus has made his way into Hades where he is approached by the spirit of his comrade from the Trojan War, Achilles. In Odysseus' dialogue with the spirit, he praises the deeds of his friend Achilles while still alive and recalls entering the wooden horse. He says, "And again, when we, the best of the Argives, were about to descend (κατεβαίνομεν) into the horse which Epeius made …" (Homer, *Od*. 11.523 [Murray, LCL]).[15] Notice, by means of one verb "to descend" κατεβαίνομεν (first person plural, imperfect active indicative), it indicates the size of the wooden horse. That the wooden horse was so large, it could hold a large number of people. Likewise, recounting the fall of Troy, Vergil in the *Aeneid* states that the Greeks were, "sliding down a lowered rope" in order to exit the wooden horse so they could attack the Trojans (Vergil, *Aen*.

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[13] Translation slightly modified.

[14] Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 407.

[15] Slightly modified translation.

2.262 [Fairclough, LCL]).[16] The phrase indicates the vast height of the wooden horse and its great size.

The second category of ἔμφασις, when something said means something which is not actually said, is expressed in Cicero's *Pro Ligario*. The *Pro Ligario* is Cicero's defense of Quintus Ligarius before Julius Caesar for his alleged attempt to bring arms against Caesar. Cicero says,

> I will speak without reserve what I feel, Caesar. If, in the greatness of your fortunes, the clemency, in which you purposely, yes, purposely persist—and I realize what I am saying—had not been equally great, then your triumph would be overwhelmed in a flood of bitter mourning. How many of the victors would there be who would have you pitiless, since such are found even among the vanquished? How many would be those who, wishing that none should be pardoned by you, would raise barriers against your mercy, when even those whom you yourself have pardoned would have you show no compassion towards others? (Cicero, *Lig.* 15 [Watts, LCL]).

Quintilian states that we, the audience, understand that Cicero suppresses "the fact" that Caesar does not lack counsellors who would likely incite him to violence (*Inst.* 8.3.85). But Cicero does not openly suggest this in his speech. The audience, rather, conjectures this by noticing what is not said (Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.3.85).

Understanding Πλάγιον

Πλάγιον (*deflection*) is the second type of figured speech.[17] This figure has the speaker present a set of headings (κεφάλαια) but then develops these headings by seeking out another

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[16] For other examples of *significatio* in Virgil see Richard F. Thomas, "A Trope By Any Other Name: "Polysemy," Ambiguity, and Significatio in Virgil," *HSCP* 100 (2000): 381-407.

[17] Though there are other ways of translating πλάγιον, in these contexts "deflection" best captures the meaning of this term.

objective (Ps.-Dionysius, *Ars. Rhet.* 296. 14-20).[18] Demetrius describes πλάγιον as an "indirect expression" which "is more impressive than the direct (εὐθέος)" (*Eloc*. 2.104).[19] In *On Invention* Ps.-Hermogenes says that πλάγιον "is a 'deflected' [πλάγιον] problem whenever, while arguing for the opposite side, the speech also accomplishes something else" (*De inv.* 4.13.205). Πλάγιον can therefore be described as a figured speech which seeks to accomplish one objective overtly while simultaneously accomplishing another covertly.[20]

Ps.-Dionysius gives an example of πλάγιον in *Ars Rhetorica* 325.13-327.18. The example draws from Diomedes' attack on Agamemnon in *Iliad* 9.32-49. The text from the *Iliad* reads,

> "Son of Atreus, with you first will I contend in your folly, where it is my right, O king, in the place of assembly: and do not be at all angry. My valor you first reviled among the Danaans, and said that I was no man of war but lacking in valor; and all this know the Achaeans both young and old. But as for you, the son of crooked-counseling Cronos has given you a double endowment: with the scepter he has granted you to be honored above all, but valor he gave you not, in which is the greatest might. Strange man, do you really think that the sons of the Achaeans are so unwarlike and lacking in valor as you proclaim? If your own heart is eager to return home, go; before you lies the way, and your ships stand beside the sea, all the many ships that followed you from Mycenae. But the other long-haired Achaeans will remain here until we have sacked Troy. And if they, too . . . let them flee in their ships to their dear native land; yet will we two, Sthenelus and I, fight on, until we win the goal of Ilios; for with the aid of a god have we come" (*Iliad*, 9.32-49 [Wyatt, LCL]).

Ps.-Dionysius rightly suggests that Diomedes' attack of the king seems out of place and quite unsuitable (οὗτος ὁ λόγος, ἂν μή τι ἕτερον διοικῆται ἢ λέγῃ, παντάπασιν ἄτοπός ἐστι καὶ ἀσχήμων). Even Diomedes goes on to acknowledge that his speech is an inappropriate one and even begins to apologize. Ps.-Dionysius suggests that Diomedes is only pretending to be angry

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[18] Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 26. See also Heath, "Pseudo-Dionysius," 82.

[19] See also Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 408.

[20] Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 26.

with Agamemnon and is essentially speaking in his favor. By giving the impression that he wants Agamemnon to leave, he is actually telling Agamemnon to remain and fight. Though Diomedes begins his speech with an overt objective of suggesting that Agamemnon leave, he accomplishes the covert objective which is to persuade Agamemnon to remain and do battle. [21]

Malcom Heath states that πλάγιον in speeches, as illustrated in Ps.-Dionysius, highlights "interwoven subjects" which helps accomplish multiple purposes.[22] A speech could have multiple covert aims, which could be hidden; Ps.-Dionysius draws on the example from Plato's *Apology* (*Ars. Rhet*. 305.5-309.10). As Jason Whitlark suggests, the aim of the speech is Socrates' defense against his accusers, but the covert aims are many: a condemnation of his Athenian accusers, Plato offering an encomium on Socrates, and teaching one how to be a philosopher.[23]

Understanding Ἐναντίον

Ἐναντίον (*saying the opposite*) is the third type of figured speech. [24] Ps.- Hermogenes defines ἐναντίον as an "opposition." He says, "Problems are opposed [ἐναντίον] whenever we are arguing for the opposite of what we actually say" (*De inv*. 4.13.205). Ἐναντίον is therefore understood to be *irony* in its figured form. Quintilian notes that *saying the opposite* (ἐναντιότης) is disguised *irony* (*Inst*. 9.2.46).

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[21] Whitlark highlights another example of πλάγιον in Aeschylus' play *Agamemnon*. See Ibid., 26-27.

[22] Heath, "Pseudo-Dionysius," 83. Also, Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 27.

[23] Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 27; 27 n.20.

[24] Though there are other ways of translating ἐναντίον, in these contexts, "saying the opposite" best captures the meaning of this term.

Ἐναντίον is often incorporated into encomia since encomiums are easily adaptable to this form of disguised irony.[25] Blame could be rendered as through praise. Whitlark notes this as a possibility "because virtue was often understood as the mean between two vices. Because virtue is defined relative to the two extremes, virtue can be portrayed as vice and vice as virtue" (cf. Quinilian, *Inst*. 3.7.25).[26] Whitlark draws from the discussion in Plutarch's *De Moralia*. He writes,

> And so in attempts at flattery we should be observant and on our guard against prodigality being called "liberality," cowardice "self-preservation," impulsiveness "quickness," stinginess "frugality," the amorous man "companionable and amiable," the irascible and overbearing "spirited," the insignificant and meek "kindly" (*Adul. am.* 56C [Babbitt, LCL]).

The idea presented here is the concealing of one's own opinion. It is important to note here that unlike *implied meaning*, there is no precondition mentioned for the incorporation of ἐναντίον such as fear or propriety. Rather Quintilian notes that "the real orator, the good man, will never do this, unless led into it by the public interest" (*Inst*. 3.7.25 [Russel, LCL]). Ultimately, the aim of ἐναντίον is not to ridicule one's opponent but to achieve a future victory over the opponent, by exposing the opponent's rhetoric as absurd. [27]

These three categories of figured speech, namely ἔμφασις, πλάγιον, and ἐναντίον were used by ancient writers and orators whenever they wanted to convey a covert message or aim. Yet, what circumstances called for the use of figured speaking?

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[25] Ibid., 28.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 405.

Circumstances for Figured Speech

As it has been shown, figured speech had several uses. With regard to implied meaning, or

ἔμφασις, it is used when a speaker wants to express something but under conditions where the

speaker is either unable or unwilling to do so directly. Under this circumstance, the speaker must

hint to the audience or reader so that they may find and understand the covert message. Unlike

ἐναντίον, the hidden meaning and the real meaning are not opposites but are "like a vessel and its

contents, or a shell and its kernel."[28] Quintilian states that there are three circumstances which

require the application of ἔμφασις (*Inst*. 9.2.66): fear (*Inst*. 9.2.67-75), respect (*Inst*. 9.2.76-80),

and elegance (*Inst*. 9.2.96-99).[29] Ps.-Demetrius says that are only two conditions: propriety

(εὐπρέπεια) and caution (ἀσφάλεια; *Eloc*. 5.287).[30]

Implied Meaning Regarding Fear and Respect (Caution)

With regard to fear and respect Quintilian says,

> … we imagine conditions laid down by tyrants on abdication and decrees passed … and
> it a capital offence to accuse a person with what is past. … For we may speak against the
> tyrants in question as openly as we please without loss of effect, provided always that
> what we say is susceptible of different interpretation, since it is only danger to ourselves,
> and not offence to them, that we have to avoid (*Inst*. 9.2.67 [Butler, LCL]).

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[28] Ibid., 408.

[29] There is not much to discuss with regards to ἔμφασις and elegance. Quintilian states that it is
merely an artistic device used to indicate something by allusion (*Inst*. 9.2.97).

[30] Frederick Ahl accounts for their difference in terminology by suggesting that these texts are
products of their time. Quintilian writes not out of politeness or decency but rather is trying to survive as
a rhetorician in a post Julio-Claudian Empire which was riddled with civil war and other political
problems. Ps.-Demetrius, writing almost two centuries after Quintilian, does not seem to worry much
about "survival" possibly because of his "Greekness." See Frederick Ahl, "The Art of Safe Criticism in
Greece and Rome," *AJP* 105 (1984): 174-208; esp. 187-192. See also Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 29-31

Hence, in instances when a speaker would seek to criticize the ruling elite, especially when the authority may have hindered "free speech," the speaker would employ ἔμφασις. When using the figure under the conditions of fear, the primary task is not to be "too obvious." Quintilian continues,

> And this fault can be avoided, if the *figure* does not depend on the employment of words of doubtful or double meaning as the words which occur in the theme of the suspected daughter-in-law: "I married the wife who pleased my father (Duxi uxorem, quae patri placuit)" (*Inst*. 9.2.69 [Butler, LCL]).

On the one hand, Quintilian suggests the avoidance of words with doubtful or double meanings. These words could implicate someone in a court setting where one stands accused of undermining the ruling government. On the other hand, Ps.- Hermogenes states that some situations (though he does not specify which situations) call for words that can have two meanings, "both what is unexceptionable and what is significant" (*De inv*. 4.13.209).

Like Quintilian, Ps.- Demetrius states that at a time when there are despots, the one who seeks to criticize should neither patronize nor offer direct censure of the ruling elite. He says, "It is best to pursue the middle course, that of innuendo (τὸ ἐσχηματισμένον)" (*Eloc*. 5.294).[31] Similarly, Ps.- Hermogenes states that the figure *implied meaning* should be employed, "whenever we are not able to speak (*openly*) because hindered and lacking freedom of speech …" (*De inv*. 4.13.206).

<div align="center">Implied Meaning with Regard to Propriety</div>

We have already noted an example of implied meaning in circumstances of propriety with the example of good taste (εὐπρεπείας) in Ps.- Demetrius' treatment of Phaedo 59B-C; Plato's

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[31] Slightly modified translation.

figured criticism of Aristippus and Cleombrotus (*Eloc*. 5.288). To reiterate, Aristippus and

Cleombrotus are covertly scorned because they are less than thirty-miles away from Athens

where Socrates is imprisoned. They were in Aegina and not at the side of their master, Socrates.

As Ps.- Demetrius explains, everything that leads up to Phaedo's mention of these friends is done

for the sake of mentioning that both Aristippus and Cleombrotus were close but nowhere to be

seen. As Quintilian notes, the point of *implication* is to give "gentle expression to unpleasing

facts" (*Inst*. 9.2.92 [Butler, LCL]).

Strategies for Creating and Detecting Figured Speech

Rhetorical Strategies for Creating Implied Meaning

Some ancient Greco-Roman rhetoricians enumerate strategies for creating figured speech, in

particular ἔμφασις. As Jason Whitlark notes, these strategies are not comprehensive but are

rather illustrative.[32] The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* lists five strategies for producing *significatio*, a

rhetorical category that corresponds to ἔμφασις (*Rhet. Her*. 4.53.67): these subcategories of

ἔμφασις are hyperbole (*superlatio*), ambiguity (*ambiguum*), logical consequence (*consequentia*),

aposiopesis (*abscisio*), and analogy (*similitudo*).[33]

Ps.- Cicero says that hyperbole is "when more is said than the truth warrants, so as to

give greater force to the suspicion …" (*Rhet. Her*. 4.53. 67 [Caplan, LCL]). Quintilian suggests

that hyperbole can be used in a number of ways but is fundamentally "an elegant straining of the

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[32] Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 33. See also pgs. 33-35.

[33] In his *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian also highlights other methods for the creation and detection
of figured speech: ellipses (*detractio*) (9.2.37), suggestion (*suggestio*) (9.2.15), anticipation (*praesumptio*)
(9.2.17), impersonation (*persona*) (9.2.30-37), and apostrophe (*aversus*) (9.2.38).

truth … for exaggeration or attenuation" (*Inst*. 8.6.67 [Butler, LCL]). Hyperbole can be employed by stretching the truth, lavish praise, or by metaphor.

Ambiguity is also a method for creating ἔμφασις. Ps.- Cicero states that implied meaning is produced by ambiguity "when a word can be taken in two or more senses, but yet is taken in that sense which the speaker intends" (*Rhet. Her*. 4.53.67 [Caplan, LCL]). Ambiguity is said to leave one in the dark with regard to the true meaning of some word, but often times rather leaves a choice between two meanings.[34] As Ps.- Cicero suggests, "it will be easy to find them [ambiguities] if we know and pay heed to the double and multiple meanings of words" (*Rhet. Her*. 4.54.67 [Caplan, LCL]). Quintilian even suggests that ambiguity is an ingenious play between an obvious and an underlying meaning (*Inst*. 8.2.21). Ἔμφασις can also be produced by logical consequence, "when one mentions the things that follow from a given circumstance, thus leaving the whole matter in distrust" (*Rhet. Her*. 4.54.67 [Caplan, LCL]). In other words, as Jason Whitlark states, logical consequence is "when either what follows is assumed or the necessary conditions are assumed from resulting circumstances."[35]

Ἔμφασις is also produced through aposiopesis, which is the omission of the expression of an idea, made known by an abrupt stop in the sentence (*Rhet. Her*. 4.54.67).[36] Aposiopesis has several motives which are divided into two groups: the emotive aposiopesis and the calculated aposiopesis. The emotive aposiopesis abruptly stops a sentence due to an increasing emotional

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[34] Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 1070.

[35] Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 33.

[36] Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 394. Aposiopesis is also called *reticentia* (Ps. Cicero, *Rhet. Her*. 4.54.67), *obticentia* (Celsus, *De oratore* 3.205), and *interruptio* (Quintilian, *Inst*. 9.2.54).

outburst. Often, the speaker will realize their emotional outburst and return to their original motive with a transitioning conjunction (Quin. *Inst*. 9.2.54).[37] The calculated aposiopesis is based on a conflict between that which has been omitted. and some opposing force which rejects this omitted utterance.[38] The calculated aposiopesis can occur between a speaker and an audience. The speaker would omit something from their oration, and the audience, in accordance with the speaker's intention, would understand the omitted utterance. This sort of calculated aposiopesis may be called an emphatic aposiopesis (*Rhet. Her.* 4.30.41).

Finally, ἔμφασις is expressed by means of analogy (*similitudo*) which, Ps.- Cicero says, is "when we cite some analogue and do not amplify it, but by its means intimate what we are thinking …" (*Rhet. Her.* 4.54.67 [Caplan, LCL]). Elsewhere Ps.-Cicero describes analogy at length, saying, "comparison (*similitudo*) is a manner of speech that carries over an element of likeness from one thing to a different thing. This is used to embellish or prove or clarify or vivify" (*Rhet. Her.* 4.46.59 [Caplan, LCL]). Analogy is a broad category which includes simile, metaphor, and other types of comparison.[39]

In his *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian also highlights apostrophe as a means of creating and detecting figured speaking (9.2.38). Apostrophe (ἀποστροφή), literally a "turning away" from the intended audience and the addressing of another audience which is "surprisingly" chosen by the speaker.[40] This figure has an emotive effect on the normal audience. As Heinrich Lausberg

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[37] Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 395.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Thomas, "A Trope by Any Other Name," 404.

[40] Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 338.

observes, apostrophe is "an emotional move of despair on the part of speaker."[41] The figure can also take the form of a question, an *interrogatio*, where the question is asked with no answer given.[42] The answer is supposed to be self-evident. For example in Vergil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas and his comrades land in Thrace and begin to build a settlement. He begins to build and decorate altars to offer sacrifices. When he tears apart myrtle trees for the altars, blood gushes from the branches. The voice of Polydorus is heard from Hades and he speaks to Aeneas telling Aeneas of his demise. The reader learns that Polydorus was sent to Thrace by Troy's king with gold so that the king of Thrace would safe keep the gold lest Troy should fall. The Thracian king instead killed Polydorus and kept the gold for himself. Polydorus was killed with spears which then took root and became the myrtle trees, hence the blood gushing from the branches. Yet in the middle of this speech, Aeneas addresses another audience, and questions them. He says, "To what crime do you not drive the hearts of men, accursed hunger for gold" (*Aen*. 3.56 [Fairclough, LCL])? In this situation, from the point of view of the speaker, the answer is supposed to be self-evident. Often, the apostrophe in the form of a question is meant to humiliate the opposing party (Quint. *Inst*. 9.2.7).

These techniques, in and of themselves, do not necessarily imply figured speaking. Indeed, these rhetorical strategies could function differently under different circumstances (e.g., Quint. *Inst*. 9.2.100). Yet, under what circumstances can we identify a figured speech? Similarly, how can we identify a figured text?

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 339-340.

Identifying and Detecting Figured Texts

As Steve Mason suggests, the issue of the "clued-in observer" is crucial for the understanding of figured texts.[43] In his discussion of Josephus, he highlights the importance of inner-textual clues but also, in some cases, the importance of extra-textual historical and literary resources in identifying figured speech. He describes both text-dependent irony and audience-dependent irony.[44]

Text-Dependent Irony

In our previous discussion of ἔμφασις, we highlighted two types of the figure: when something is said explicitly, and when something said means something which is not actually said. Text-dependent irony corresponds to the former. Text-dependent irony is when the author of a text will ensure that the audience detects the irony and will therefore embed whatever clues are necessary for the audience to hear and understand the irony. The implied audience, therefore, is given certain information which remains unknown to the actual characters in the text.[45]

An example of text-dependent irony can be drawn from the Gospel of Mark.[46] The reader learns from the opening lines that Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 1:1). The reader is also aware of the private revelation between the Father and Jesus, that Jesus is the beloved son and God is well-pleased in him (Mark 1:11). The reader no doubt connects Mark 1:11 to Mark 1:1, and though

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[43] Mason, "Figured Speech and Irony in Josephus," 249-250.

[44] Ibid., 249-251.

[45] Ibid., 250.

[46] See Steve Mason's treatment of the gospel of John in, ibid. Also see Jason Whitlark's more detailed treatment of Mason's argument in Whitlark, *Resisting Empire*, 34-35.

there is paradox and ambiguity in the gospel, the reader understands the identity of Jesus from the beginning.[47] The disciples of Jesus, though they have seen Jesus exercise authority over evil spirits (cf. Mark 1:21-27; 1:32-34 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14-29), over nature (cf. Mark 4:35-41; 6:45-52; 11:12-14), over illness (cf. Mark 1:29-31; 1:32-34; 1:40-45; 2:1-12; 3:1-6; 5:25-34; 6:53-56; 7:31-37; 8:22-26; 10:46-52), and over the power of death (cf. Mark 5:21-24, 35-43) still remain ignorant of Jesus' identity (cf. Mark 4:13; 4:40 6:52; 7:18; 8:17; 9:32).[48] Jesus even discloses private information to his disciples (Mark 4:11; 9:2-8), and yet they remain ignorant, even to the point of abandoning him (Mark 14:50). This irony reaches its climax when a pagan centurion at the cross proclaims Jesus' divinity and authority, while those closest to him are nowhere in sight (Mark 15:39). [49] Yet, from the beginning, the audience knows of Jesus's divine origin, which many of the characters in the gospel do not know. This not only helps dramatize the narrative but also generates irony throughout the gospel.

Audience-Dependent Irony

Audience-dependent irony corresponds to ἔμφασις, of the second type; when something said really means something which is not actually said. This type of figured speech is more difficult to detect because hints (of irony) are not embedded in the text itself. Rather, it is the

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[47] R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 79.

[48] On the ignorance of the disciples in the Gospel of Mark see Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Mark*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1970), 162-225: Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, Hermeneia, ed. Harold W. Attridge (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 441: France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 27-29.

[49] On irony in the Gospel of Mark, see Jerry Camery-Hogatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext,* SNTSMS (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

historical context of the text which supplies the reader with information that irony is at play. As

Shadi Bartsch notes, this type of figuration, where audience detection is central, became popular

in Roman theater in the first-century CE.[50] In other words, the audience turned the intentionally

ambiguous into the politically allusive.[51]

> Ps.-Demetrius highlights this type of figuration in *Eloc*. 1.8.

> As an instance of concise wording the following may be given, 'The Lacedaemonians to Philip: *Dionysius at Corinth*.' This brief expression is felt to be far more forcible than if the Lacedaemonians had said at full length that Dionysius, although once a mighty monarch like yourself, now resides at Corinth in a private station. Once the statement is given in full, it resembles not a rebuke but a narrative; it suggests the instructor rather than the intimidator. The passion and vehemence of the expression are enfeebled when thus extended. As a wild beast gathers itself together for the attack, so should discourse gather itself together as in a coil in order to increase its vigour.

Again, he reiterates in *Eloc*. 5.241 "If they had expanded the thought at full length, saying

'Dionysius has been deposed from his sovereignty and is now a beggarly schoolmaster at

Corinth,' the result would have been a bit of narrative rather than a taunt." Notice how the more

effective, more ironical, phrase is the shorter one. The force of the phrase is in what is not said.

For this reason, this type of irony depends on the knowledge of the audience. For the modern

reader, one can only appreciate this irony after a closer study of the historical background of a

text.[52]

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[50] Shadi Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 75-82.

[51] Ibid., 78.

[52] Ahl, "Safe Criticism," 176.

Summary

In summary, we may conclude that figured speech is a phenomenon in ancient rhetoric which could be detected by means of context clues or by means of inquiry. Three forms of figured speech were commonly recognized among these ancient rhetoricians: the implied meaning (ἔμφασις), deflection (πλάγιον), and saying the opposite (ἐναντίον). Inasmuch as figured speech was in vogue in the ancient world, it was used with caution. As mentioned above, Quintilian says that there are three contexts for the use of figured speech: when it was unsafe to speak, in cases of propriety, and for elegance (*Inst*. 9.2.65).

Detection of Figured Speech in Paul

Hidden Transcripts, Irony, and the Letters of Paul

Introduction

In some political readings of Paul, it is argued that Paul wrote in figured speech in order to avoid persecution by the Roman government. This would suggest that Paul incorporated figured speech into parts of his letters to avoid detection by the ruling powers. If these commentators are correct in their observation, that means Paul employs figured speech because it was unsafe to speak. Paul, therefore, used ἔμφασις to convey a hidden message to the followers of Christ lest they should be jailed or even killed.

In the following sections, three texts will be examined which some postcolonial interpreters of Paul use as primary examples of Paul's hidden agenda: 1 Thess 2:13-16, Phil 3, and Rom 13:1-7. The essays which will be treated are, to my knowledge, the fullest positive treatment

of hidden transcripts in Paul's letters.[53] The authors find examples of hidden transcripts in some

of Paul's letters and explain it as an attempt by Paul to avoid persecution by the imperial

authority. But as we shall see, Paul does not integrate any of the known strategies for creating

figured speech in these passages. Furthermore, detection of figured speaking, both text-

dependent irony and audience-dependent irony, does not seem at issue, nor does it appear to be

used.

<p style="text-align:center">1 Thessalonians 2:13-16</p>

> "And on account of this also we continually give thanks to God, since you received the
> word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted not the word of man but as it is
> truly the word of God, which also is at work in you who believe. For you, brethren,
> became imitators of the churches of God, which are in Judea, in Christ Jesus, because you
> also suffered by your own countrymen, even as they have also suffered by the Jews who
> killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and also harshly persecuted us, and do not
> please God, and are adversaries to all humanity; prohibiting us to speak to the gentiles in
> order that they may be saved; in this way they always fill up their measure of sin. But the
> wrath God came upon them unto the end." 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16

It must be noted that 1 Thess 2:13-16 has a contentious interpretive history. In more recent

scholarship, some have made a good argument that 1 Thess 2:13-16 is an interpolation into the

letter.[54] As M. Eugene Boring suggests, much of the argument for this passage being an

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[53] [1 Thess 2:13–6] Abraham Smith, ""Unmasking the Powers:" Toward a Postcolonial Analysis of 1 Thessalonians" in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004), 47-66: [Phil 3] N.T. Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," in *Paul and Politics*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000), 160-183: [Rom 13:1–7] William R. Herzog II, "Dissembling, A Weapon of the Weak: The Case of Christ and Caesar in Mark 12:13-17 and Romans 13:1-7," *PRSt* 21 (1994): 339-360.

[54] E.g. see Birger Pearson, "1 Thessalonians 2:13-16: A Deutero-Pauline Interpolation," *HTR* 64 (1971): 79-94: Daryl Dean Schmidt, "1 Thess 2:13-16: Linguistic Evidence for an Interpolation," *JBL* 102 (1983): 269-279. For arguments against an interpolation see J.W. Simpson, "The Problems Posed by 1Thessalonians 2.15-16 and a Solution," *HBT* 12 (1990):42-72: Jon Allen Weatherly, "The Authenticity of 1 Thessalonians 2.13-16: Additional Evidence," *JSNT* 42 (1991): 79-98: Bruce C. Johanson, *To all the*

interpolation arose in a post-World War II era, with sensitivity toward anti-Judaism or perceived anti-Judaism.[55] Ultimately, the dispute revolves around the notion that Paul is claiming all Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus. For instance, many English translations place a comma after verse 14 which introduces a general statement: "for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they *did* from the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out" (1 Thess 2:14-15 NAS; also see the NIV, RSV, etc.). Hence, all Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus. Rather, this should be understood as a restrictive clause since Paul could not have had all Jews in mind, because some Jews, including himself, were believers in Christ. The accusations Paul makes against "the Jews" in 2:14-15 should not be understood as Paul's anger toward all Jews but rather against those specific people who were persecuting Paul and the Church.[56] This line of argumentation allows some scholars to maintain that 1 Thess 2:13-16 is not an interpolation into the letter. For the sake of argument, therefore, we will understand 1 Thess 2:13-16 not as an interpolation but as an original part of the letter.

Because of its history, 1 Thess 2:13-16 is often a point of contention when interpreting the larger letter. Some have even ventured to argue that Paul is not actually arguing against the Jews

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Brethren: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to 1 Thessalonians, ConBNT (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell Internation, 1991).

[55] M. Eugene Boring, *1 & II Thessalonians: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 91. See his fuller discussion in defense of a unified composition of 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 on pages 91-95.

[56] See Jefferey A.D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians,* BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 168. Also, Frank D. Gilliard, "The Problem of the Antisemitic Comma Between 1 Thessalonians 2.14 and 15" in *NTS* 35 (1989): 481-502: C. B. Amphoux, "1 Th 2,14-16: Quel Juifs sont-ils mis en cause par Paul?" *Filologia neotestamentaria* 16 (2003): 85-101.

but "the Jews," rather, is code for another enemy, possibly Rome. Abraham Smith is a proponent of this line of argument and understands this passage as coded language meant to undermine the empire. [57] Yet, as we shall see, Paul is neither concerned with Rome nor undermining Rome. Paul is concerned, however, with defending his first visit to Thessalonica, a visit which he says bore good fruit.

To reiterate, Smith understands 1 Thess 2:13-16 as Paul's attempt to critique the Roman imperial order by subtle and indirect analogies. Paul's objective in this passage, he argues, is to critique "the dominating pro-Roman elite in Thessalonica through an analogy with pro-Roman priestly aristocracy in Judea."[58] Smith situates his argument on historical and discursive resistances to Roman power.[59] First, he suggests that Paul, who would have spent a long while in Jerusalem, would have been familiar with resistance efforts against Rome by both Judeans and Hellenistic philosophers.

Paul, a Jew, would be aware of the prophetic tradition of resistance and liberation. Most important would be his familiarity with the foundational Passover story, God liberating the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt (Exod 12).[60] Smith also highlights the Jewish uprisings

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[57] Smith, "Unmasking the Powers,"47-66. See also Karl P. Donfried, "The Imperial Cults of Thessalonica and Political Conflict in 1 Thessalonians," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in the Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1997), 215-223. Also, James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology*, WUNT 273 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011)

[58] Smith, "'Unmasking the Powers,'" 49-50.

[59] Ibid., 50-51.

[60] Ibid., 51. Also Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*: *The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 38.

which were instigated by messianic movements in 4 BCE and during the Jewish War of 66-70 CE.[61] These movements even took form in scribal texts, including some among the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g. 1QS, CD, etc.), and among the Sicarii movement in the 50s and 60s CE as recounted by Josephus (*B.J.* 7.253-355).[62] Smith says, "Like others before him, Paul drew *discursively* on the Israelite tradition of resistance in his appropriation of Scripture."[63] Paul, who likely drew on the prophetic tradition, especially the Deutero-Isaiah tradition in 1 Thessalonians, would *insure* he is writing a type of resistance literature.[64]

Furthermore, Paul who was preaching in the Hellenized Greco-Roman East, would have been acquainted with how the imperial powers described themselves as gods and godlike heroes, benefactors, and saviors. Paul sought to create an alternative community, "a viable, oppositional network of shared value across time and space."[65] Smith goes on to say, "Members of the groups frequently denounced the former honor they received when they achieved wealth and reputation."[66] He therefore argues that Paul's network of communities was a "historical" means

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[61] Smith, "'Unmasking the Powers,'" 51. Also, Stephen L. Dyson, "Native Revolt Patterns in the Roman Empire," *ANRW* (1975): 138-175.

[62] Smith, "'Unmasking the Powers,'" 51.

[63] Smith, "'Unmasking the Powers,'" 52. For a general introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls and 1QS see James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations: Volume 1: Rule of the Community and Related Documents* (Tübingen: J. C. V. Mohr Paul Siebeck, 1994): and Michael A. Knibb, "Rule of the Community." in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls,* ed., Lawrence H. Shiffman and James C. VanderKam. Vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 793-797.

[64] Smith, "'Unmasking the Powers,'" 23. Emphasis mine.

[65] Ibid., 54.

[66] Ibid.

of resisting the Roman Empire. Smith concludes that Paul is urging his community at Thessalonica, because of their "brotherhood," to remove themselves from and to refuse to participate in the imperial cultic activities which legitimized the empire.[67]

When Smith reads 1 Thess 2:13-16, he finds "clear evidence" that Paul is criticizing both the Thessalonian aristocracy and the Judean aristocracy, who were both strongly pro-Roman and instruments of Roman imperial authority.[68] We may affirm, however, the strong presence of a pro-Roman sentiment in Thessalonica. Thessalonica, a city of Macedonia, was given the status of a free, immune, and allied city. Though still subject to Rome, their relations were permanently defined if their grant of freedom continued to be recognized.[69] It is interesting to note, that unlike the earlier free cities and colonies of Macedonia, Thessalonica did not adopt Latin as its official language but continued to use Greek, which is seen in their coinage.[70] Nonetheless, Smith argues that 1 Thess 2:13-16 is Paul's analogical attempt at criticizing Rome in three different ways: diction, Paul's worldview, and Paul's specific use of analogy.

Smith understands Paul as setting up a community in direct opposition to Rome and its emperor. Jesus is the true "Lord" and the true "savior" which contrasts the "lordship" and "divine sonship" of the emperor in Thessalonica. Moreover, Paul's use of the technical term of ἐκκλησίαι (assemblies) for his communities "clearly" suggests Paul's intentions at creating

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[67] Ibid. See also Neil Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994), esp. 195.

[68] Smith, "'Unmasking the Powers,'" 58-62.

[69] J.A.O. Larsen, "Roman Greece," in *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, ed. Tenney Frank (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1938), 4:259-498; esp. 4.445, 449.

[70] Ibid., 449.

oppositional communities. [71] Though we have spoken at length with regard to parallel terminology in chapter one, it should suffice to reiterate briefly the difficulties with this argument. The mere existence of *parallel* terminology does not necessarily imply an antithetical relationship between Paul and the emperor. What should foremost guide our reading of Paul is his Jewishness. This allows us to take into consideration Paul's use of particular terminology.[72] Greco-Roman society was heavily influenced by notions of the divine and sacred. It is likely that Paul used certain terms not because he wanted to oppose the emperor, but rather certain terms made it easier to communicate his ideas to a particular community. As Christopher Bryan notes, "They all had to use *some* vocabulary and concepts to speak of the things that they held sacred, and if they were to communicate at all, they all had to draw on more or less the same vocabulary and concepts as everyone else. Hence, there were bound to be parallels between them."[73]

Smith further suggests that because Paul is describing persecution in 1 Thess 2:13-16, he is indicating the imminent return of Christ. It is an apocalyptic worldview which Smith proposes has political overtones. Pointing to a tradition of judgment and deliverance (cf. Dan 12:1: Mark 13:19; Matt 24:9-14), Paul is anticipating a new era for his communities. Their persecution indicates the imminence of the *Parousia* of Christ wherein they will be delivered from oppression, and God will enact judgment on the old order (Rome). As Smith proposes, this new

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[71] Smith, "'Unmasking the Powers,'" 60-61.

[72] John M.G. Barclay, "Why the Roman Empire was Insignificant to Paul," in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*, WUNT 275 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 363-387.

[73] Christopher Bryan, *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early Church, and the Roman Superpower* (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 2005), 90.

era is in direct contrast "to the Thessalonian declarations that new eras had begun with the victories of the Roman warlords Antony and Octavian."[74]

Finally, by means of analogy, Paul characterizes the Thessalonian persecutors as relentless and may indicate their "lack of self-control."[75] Their fellow countryfolk, argues Smith, present a lack of "self-mastery" which was a popular philosophical topic in the first century CE.[76] Augustus also adopted this philosophical precept for his empire.[77] This is imporant because if Paul is arguing against the virtue of the empire, there is irony insofar as the empire claimed self-control "as the basis for its governance of the entire world."[78]

For Smith to claim that Paul uses analogy and irony, subcategories of implied meaning, in 1 Thess 2:13-16 is to suggest that Paul is using figured speech. Smith suggests Paul uses "subtle or indirect ways" to critique the empire because of their "repressive character."[79] This proposes that Paul incorporated implied meaning (ἔμφασις), out of fear of the oppressor. Ἔμφασις is when the speaker must hint to the audience that they may find and understand a covert message. From Smith's description, we may understand that he is describing audience-dependent irony (when something said means something which is not actually said). The notion here is that the historical

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[74] Smith, "'Unmasking the Powers,'" 61.

[75] Ibid.

[76] For more information on Stoicism and Middle-Platonism, especially on the topic of self-control in the first-century CE see Hans Svebakken, *Philo of Alexandria's Exposition on the Tenth Commandment* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2012).

[77] Catherine Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 25.

[78] Smith, ""Unmasking the Powers,"", 62.

[79] Ibid., 54.

context of the text supplies the audience with information that irony is at work. This type of irony works by the employment of concise wording or brief expressions, leaving some thoughts to be filled in. The force of this type of ἔμφασις is in what is not said. Smith surmises the audience would understand 1 Thess 2:13-16 as Paul's attempt to critique the lack of self-control of the Roman powers, which the empire adopted as its *official philosophical topos*. Therefore, Paul, in essence, is trying to delegitimize not only the imperial cultic activities but also those who honor and collaborate with the empire.

Audience-dependent irony, often, depends on short phrases wherein the audience would fill in the gap. As Ps.-Demetrius demonstrated with the short ironical phrase "Dionysius at Corinth," which suggests that this once mighty king is now deposed and lives in exile (*Eloc*. 1.8). If we closely examine 1 Thess 2:13-16, Paul does not seem to clue in his reader to any irony. Even if we venture toward a discussion of self-control, vices and virtues do not seem at issue here as it appears in Paul's other letters (cf. Rom 1:29-32; 13:13-14; 1 Cor 5:9-13; 6:9-11; 2 Cor 6:6-7; 8:7; 12:20-21; Gal 5:19-23; Phil 4:8-9).[80] One must consider Paul's agenda not only in this short passage but also in the entire chapter. Paul is not concerned here to delegitimize the emperor or

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[80] On the ethical lists in the New Testament, see B. S. Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists." *JBL* 51 (1932): 1-12: Neil J. McEleney, "Vice Lists of the Pastoral Epistles," *CBQ* (1974): 203-129: John T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988): Bj Oropeza, "Situational Immorality – Paul's 'Vice Lists' at Corinth," *ExpTim* 110 (1998): 9-10: Jennifer Wright Knust, "Paul and the Politics of Virtue and Vice," in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004), 155-173. On the stoic virtues see, A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987): Christoph Jedan, *Stoic Virtues: Chrysippus and the Religious Foundations of Stoic Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2009).

empire. Instead, Paul is concerned with two things: the defense of his authority and past actions in Thessalonica, and his relationship with the Thessalonian faithful.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 serves as a defense of Paul's previous work in Thessalonica and abroad.[81] Paul wants to assure the Thessalonian faithful of his continued love and care for them. And in defense of his character, Paul makes many antithetical statements (not *x* but *y*) to provide evidence of his good character and actions when he first founded the community. These antithetical statements seem to suggest that some of the Thessalonian believers were claiming Paul's first visit was "insincere" (κενή; 1 Thess 2:1). Yet Paul makes nine explicit appeals in the letter to their personal experiences with him when he was first among them ("*you know*," οἴδατε). Four of these appeals occur in 2:1-16 (2:1, 2, 5, 11; see also 1:5, 3:3, 4; 4:2; 5:2).[82] These explicit appeals serve to defend both his moral character and behavior during his first missionary trip to Thessalonica.

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[81] Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians,* 121-125. Also, Jefferey A. D. Weima, "An Apology for he Apologetic Function of 1 Thessalonians 2.1-12," *JSNT* 68 (1997): 73-99: Traugott Holtz, "On the Background of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12" in *The Thessalonians Debate: Methodological Discord or Methodological Synthesis?,* eds. Karl P. Donfried and Johannes Beutler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2000), 69-80: Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 37-47. For an opposing view that 1 Thess 2:1-12 functions primarily as a parenesis see A.J. Malherbe, "'Gentle as a Nurse:' The Cynic Background to 1 Thess ii," *NovT* 12 (1970): 203-17; George Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding,* SBLDS 73 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985): W. Stegemann, "Anlass und Hintergrun der Abfassung von 1 Th 2, 1-12" in *Theologische Brosamen für Lother Steiger*, DBAT 5 eds., G. Freund and E. Stegemann (Heidelberg: Esprint, 1985), 397-416: Earl J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, ed. Daniel J. Harington, SP (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1995): 87-89: G.S. Shogren, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 81-83.

[82] Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 124.

After he defends his first missionary "visit" to Thessalonica (2:1-12), he now shifts to their response to his past visit (2:13-16). To reiterate, some scholars contend 2:13-16 is an interpolation but, for the sake of argument, we will understand 1 Thess 2:1-16 as unified composition.[83] 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16 responds to the Thessalonian believers quite positively, that they not only accepted the word of God (2:13) but were also wiling to be persecuted for the word, like the faithful believers in Judea (2:14-16).[84] In 2:13, the word which they "received" (παραλαβόντες) and "accepted" (ἐδέξασθε), is not the word of human beings but the word of God. There is no difference between Paul's word and God's word; it is the divine gospel (2:2, 4, 8, 9). And for this reason, their reception and belief in the gospel, Paul "constantly" (ἀδιαλείπτως) gives thanks to God. The point is that because they accepted the word of God, this divine message continues to be "at work" (ἐνεργεῖται) in their lives.

For Paul, the evidence that the Thessalonians have accepted the word of God and that is at work in their lives is found in their imitation of the persecuted churches in Judea.[85] They did not intentionally imitate the Judean followers of Christ, but through their belief and circumstance, nonetheless, became imitators (μιμηταὶ ἐγενήθητε; 2:14a) of the Judean believers.[86] Paul's use of the indicative, rather than the imperative mood further illustrates his satisfaction with the conduct of the Thessalonian believers.[87]

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[83] See n.54.

[84] Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 159.

[85] Ibid., 165.

[86] Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGCT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 112.

[87] Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 165.

The specific way in which the Thessalonian believers have imitated the churches of Judea is through their suffering which they have endured for their new beliefs. This theme of persecution runs through the letter (cf. 3:1-5) but the point in 2:13-16 is the affirmation of their beliefs. This in turn is another way in which they have responded positively to Paul's first visit. Both groups, the Thessalonian believers and Judean believers, suffered persecution by their "compatriots" (συμφυλετῶν; 2:14). We should understand "compatriots" geographically, precisely, the "compatriots" in Thessalonica are locals because it stands in direct parallel to "the Jews" who were understood as the persecutors also in a local sense. The emphasis is not on self-control, or some other Stoic virtue, but rather it is the legitimization of the faith of the Thessalonian believers. First, the Thessalonians have received and accepted the divine message, the gospel of God, and it is realized in their life. Their persecution, which is an imitation of the persecution of the Judean Church – the place where the gospel was first received and accepted – certifies the validity of their faith.

This passage does not highlight any form of rhetorical irony, since it is difficult to see where Paul is following any of the ancient rhetorical methods for creating figured speech. This passage, rather, is Paul's attempt at defending his first visit. As I. Howard Marshall notes, "These verses [2:13-16] round off the 'apology' by claiming that the Thessalonians themselves accepted Paul's message as God's word and thereby rejected any insinuation that might be made against him."[88] 1 Thess 2:13-16 is Paul's attempt at presenting proof to the Thessalonians that his first visit was neither insincere nor without bearing good fruit.

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[88] I. Howard Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: Based on the Revised Standard Version*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 9.

Philippians 3

I have argued above that in 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16, Paul did not use figured speech to embed a critique of Rome under the guise of "the Jews." Yet, some postcolonial interpreters of Paul's letter to the Philippians, in similar fashion to Abraham Smith's argument for 1 Thessalonians, understand Paul's critique of the Jews as a coded critique of Rome. They argue that Paul fears persecution by the imperial forces and therefore speaks overtly about the Jews and covertly about the empire. But as we shall see, Paul is neither not concerned with the empire. Paul is very open about the gospel he preaches, which he even preaches to the praetorian guard (Phil 1:13). The argument for a hidden transcript in Philippians seems to be counterintuitive to the letter itself. Paul, in Phil 2-3, is ultimately making an anthropological argument wherein he exhorts his community to live a transformed life in the Spirit and not in the flesh. In this section, I will attempt to show that Paul is not using figured speech as a means of subverting the empire. His anthropological argument will be taken up more fully in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

One of the most prominent advocates for Pauline *hidden transcripts* is N.T. Wright. In his essay, *Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire*, he argues that Paul encodes in some of his letters the message "Jesus is Lord, Caesar is not."[89] Wright understands Paul's critique of the Jews in Phil 3:2-7, "beware of the dogs, beware of the evildoers, beware of the mutilators of the flesh" (Phil 3:2), as such, a coded message against the Roman Imperial order which correlates with Paul's claim that their true "citizenship" (πολίτευμα) is in heaven (Phil 3:20). He proposes that

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[89] Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," 160-183. See also N.T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 40-58, 69-78. For a more extensive treatment of N.T. Wright and his postcolonial interpretation of Paul, see my chapter 1.

Paul, in his critiques, has both Judaism and Paganism in mind. With regard to Philippians, the

emperor-cult also takes center stage. Wright claims,

> Paul's main concern here is not to warn the Philippians against Judaism or an anti-Pauline Jewish-Christian mission. … His concern is to warn them against the Caesar-cult and the entire panoply of pagan empire. But his method of warning them, and of encouraging them to take a stand for the counterempire of Jesus, is given for the most part in code.[90]

This message of subversion is primarily found in 3:2-11. This passage, suggests Wright, has both

an overt and a covert message.

The overt meaning is Paul making a direct claim against the Jews, not Jewish

Christians.[91] But the covert aim are the pagans. Wright argues that the Jews can also be

categorized as pagans. The first two epithets in 3:2 can be applied to the pagans, namely "the

dogs" and the "workers of evil." But the third suggests that Paul had Jews in mind, "mutilators

[of the flesh]." Wright notes that Paul does something similar in Galatians 4:1-11, where Paul

reminds the Galatian churches that if they submit to circumcision it is as if they are reverting to

paganism, back to the "beggarly elemental spirits" which are not gods (Gal 4:9). In other words,

the realm of the flesh is paganism, whether Jewish or otherwise. Wright even goes so far as to

note the different types of Judaism which arose during the second temple period (e.g., Pharisees,

"Qumran," etc.). These groups recognized their Judaism as true while all others were false, "this

move was a standard way in which many Jewish groups in the Second Temple period would

define themselves over against one another."[92] By employing this "inner Jewish rhetorical

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[90] Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," 175.

[91] Ibid., 176.

[92] Ibid., 177.

strategy" Paul is setting up a polemic which helps him build up an "anti-Caesar message" as well as an anti-imperial community.[93]

Paul, ultimately, is making the argument that in the same manner he has rethought his Judaism with regard to the Christ-event, so too must the Philippians rethink their relationship to Paganism and the Roman Empire. The final coded message for Wright appears in Phil 3:17-21. He says,

> [Paul] is building up to saying: do not go along with the Caesar-cult that is currently sweeping the Eastern Mediterranean. You have one Lord and Savior, and he will vindicate and glorify you, if you hold firm to him, just as the Father vindicated and glorified him after he had obeyed.[94]

Philippi, which was re-founded as a colony by Augustus, was proud of its status as a Roman colony.[95] Yet, for Wright, Paul is admonishing his community not to compromise their new faith in Jesus by taking part in the imperial cultic activities. They must not be leery of the emperor since their citizenship (πολίτευμα) is in heaven and not in the empire.

Wright understands Philippians to contain an anti-Roman polemic by means of hidden code. Though previously mentioned in chapter one, it should suffice to number here the inconsistencies in Wright's argument: 1) Wright argues that Paul makes an explicit challenge to the Roman emperor in Phil 2:5-11 only to suggest that Paul makes a similar message in code in

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid., 178. See also Peter Oakes, *Philippians: From People to Letter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[95] Philippi was later named *Colonia Iulia Augusta Phillipensium*. See Larsen, "Roman Greece," 449.

Phil 3;[96] 2) He argues that Paul is creating a striking contrast between loyalty to Christ and loyalty to Caesar in 2:5-11 and in 3:20-21 but then he contradicts himself saying Phil 3 makes this same message but in "subtle" coded language.[97] 3) If Paul sought to remain safe because of the subversive character of the gospel of God, why would he openly preach Christ in the letter and admit that praetorian guard even heard the gospel (Phil 1:13)?

In his discussion, Wright is arguing that Paul incorporated figured speech into the Letter to the Philippians. Though not specified by Wright, he is suggesting that Paul incorporated both ἔμφασις (implied meaning) and πλάγιον (saying the opposite). Recall that ἔμφασις, which may be used in situations of fear and respect, can be created and detected by several rhetorical techniques including hyperbole, ambiguity, logical consequence, aposiopesis, analogy, or apostrophe. Wright does not propose any of these subcategories of ἔμφασις to describe the *coded language* he finds in Phil 3. Paul, also, does not incorporate any of these rhetorical techniques into Phil 3. Rather, Paul's message seems more straightforward than coded; a life defined by faith in Christ rather than the Law of Moses.[98]

Moreover, Wright says that Paul has an overt aim while seeking out a covert aim. As previously noted, πλάγιον is a figure which seeks to accomplish an objective overtly while simultaneously accomplishing another covertly. Indeed, Paul wanted to criticize the Jews overtly and he did so quite blatantly! But, is Wright's claim that Paul's covert aim is to criticize the

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[96] Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire," 174.

[97] Ibid., 174-175.

[98] Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 289. Also, Rihard R. Melick Jr., "*Philippians, Colossians and Philemon* NAC 32 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), 126.

emperor and the imperial cults correct? When Ps.-Dionysius illustrates πλάγιον in Diomede's speech to Agamemnon (*Il.*9.32-49), he says that the speech seems out of place (*Ars Rhetorica* 325.13-327.18). Not only does the speech seem out of place but also within the speech itself, Diomedes insinuates exactly what he wants. He wants Agamemnon and his troops to remain and fight in Troy.

Philippians 3 does not seem out of place in the letter. Paul exhorts the Philippians to be steadfast in their character as followers of Christ. He also commands them to be one giving them Christ as the prime example of this unity (Phil 2:1-12). Furthermore, the Philippians belonged to a Greek colony of Rome and belonged to its citizenship. Though the term πολίτευμα may call to mind a place, Paul here is emphasizing a people. They will await Christ the Lord and Savior who will ultimately subdue all things, including the flesh, and transform them into this new citizenship. The emperor does not seem to be at issue here, rather it is Christ's transformative power which will bring all believers into himself [Christ] (3:21).

I understand that Paul, here, is making an anthropological argument in Phil 3:21. Ultimately, humanity is mortal and the flesh will be subjected to decay. Yet by Christ's transformative powers, their bodies will be metamorphized like his, by that same power which subdues all things to Christ (ὃς μετασχηματίσει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα; Phil. 3:21). Though in a different key from his other letters, Paul is exhorting his community at Philippi to live a life in the Spirit and not in the flesh (Phil 3:3; cf. Rom 8:1-14; 13:11-14; Gal 5:4-6, 16-25; 6:7-10). I will return to these themes in chapter five of this dissertation. There, I will expand and more fully develop Paul's anthropological argument in his letter to the Philippians.

Romans 13:1-7

Romans 13:1-7 is the crux of many post-colonial interpretations of Paul. [99] It is the one passage in

the Pauline corpus were Paul gives an openly positive view of the imperial authority. This

apparent, unqualifiedly, positive view of the imperial authority has led some to question Paul's

true intention. These *true* intentions are often characterized as covertly anti-imperial. Yet, after

careful inquiry, the argument made for figured speech in Rom 13:1-7 does not bear scrutiny.

Rather, Rom 13:1-7 should be understood within its wider context. Namely, Rom 13:1-7 is part of

Paul's larger exhortation in Rom 12-15 to live a moral life apart from the Mosaic Law, a life

which is also free from divisiveness. In this section, I will deal primarily with how Rom 13:1-7 is

not coded. The larger context of the letter and its implications to Paul's theology will be more

fully developed in chapter 5 of this study.

William Herzog treats Romans 13:1-7 and understands Paul's positive view of the

authority as "coded speech" for resistance to the empire.[100] For Herzog, Paul's political speech

seems to support the dominant political powers but is rather subverting it. The technical term

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[99] E.g., Neil Elliott, *The Rhetoric of Romans: Argumentative Constraint: and Strategy and Paul's Dialogue with Judaism*, JSNT 49 (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1990); Neil Elliott, "Romans 13:1-7 in the Context of Imperial Propaganda," in *Paul and Empire*, ed. Richard Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1997), 184-205; Dieter Georgi, "God Turned Upside Down," in *Paul and Empire*, ed. Richard Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1997), 148-157; E.G. Singgih, "Towards a Postcolonial Interpretation of Romans 13:1-7: Karl Barth, Robert Jewett and the Context of Reformation in Present-Day Indonesia," *AsJT* 23 (2009): 111-122; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis; Fortress Press, 2007), 780-803; R. Cassidy, "The Politization of Paul: Romans 13:1-7 in Recent Discussion," *ExpTim* 121 (2010): 383-389; M. Forman, *The Politics of Inheritance in Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Bernard Lategan, "Romans 13:1-7: A Review of Post-1989 Readings," *Scriptura* 110 (2012): 259-272: Wright, "Paul's Gospel and Caesar's Empire,"167-173.

[100] Herzog, "Dissembling, A Weapon of the Weak," 339-360.

Herzog applies to Paul's rhetorical technique is "dissembling," which is Paul's attempt at disguising the hidden transcript in submissive language. "Dissembling," then, is comparable to a kind of rhetorical subcategory of ἔμφασις, namely aposiopesis. Recall that one can create and detect ἔμφασις by means of aposiopesis, or by the omission of the expression of an idea, made known by an abrupt stop in the sentence. Developing Ernst Käsemann's and Stanley Porter's observations of Paul's *apparent omission*, Herzog suggests that Paul's silence about the limits of the Roman imperial order is intentional and is part of his coded speech.[101] Herzog suggests that Paul is not necessarily defining a just or an unjust government. Herzog, using the sociological study of James C. Scott, says that Paul's letter (a public transcript) used coded speech in case the letter should be intercepted by the imperial authority.[102] Herzog argues that because the letter is a public transcript, Paul would criticize the empire in a figured way so that he may remain incognito and avoid persecution.

Romans 13:1 begins with a command and two assertions. First, all people (Πᾶσα ψυχή) are to be subject (ὑποτασσέσθω) to the governing authorities (ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις). They should be subject because all power comes from God, and those with authority are ordained by

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[101] Herzog, "Dissembling, A Weapon of the Weak," 354. Cf. Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1980), esp. 354; S.E. Porter, "Romans 13:1-7 as Pauline Political Rhetoric," *FNT* 3 (1990): 115-139.

[102] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). In chapter one of this study, I made the argument that Paul's letters are not public transcripts but are rather private transcripts written specifically to the followers of Christ. Paul is quite open about faith in Christ and is not hesitant to speak out against those which may hinder the gospel he is preaching. Scott's argument, rather, speaks against the interpretations of many postcolonial scholars of Paul. See the argument of John M.G. Barclay which I closely followed; John M.G. Barclay, "Why the Roman Empire was Insignificant to Paul," in *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*, WUNT 275 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 363-387. See especially 376-379.

God. Romans 13:1 is then reinforced through a negative restatement were the focus becomes three groups of people, authorities, subjects, and rebels with descriptors for each.[103] Herzog notes, "Thus far, Paul seems to be writing a piece that … 'could have been written by the emperor himself!' All responsibility is on the subjects, and all legitimation falls on the authorities, including the right to crush rebellion."[104]

In Romans 13:4, Paul uses the term διάκονος to describe the rulers. Paul's intention, according to Herzog, "comes like a surgical strike."[105] The root meaning of the verbal cognate for διάκονος is "to wait at table" (cf. Luke 17:8).[106] Herein lies part of the hidden transcript. "Serving" was a menial form of service and for Paul to say that these imperial authorities are mere *servants* of God is antithetical to their actual positions. Immediately, though, Paul continues this figured speech by hiding his intentions with what follows in the remainder of the verse. His attention shifts to the retributive powers of the authority. But even this contains coded speech, "because it specifies that the military be used solely to suppress anarchy and wrong behavior. That the use of the military was hardly ever limited to these purposes was obvious."[107]

Romans 13:5 gathers together all the previous verses including their figured speech into a single sentence. At face value, the verse is clear that because all these things previously

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[103] Cf. James H. McDonald, "Romans 13:1-7: A Test Case for New Testament Interpretation," *NTS* 35 (1989): 540-543.

[104] Herzog, "Dissembling, A Weapon of the Weak," 355. Herzog quotes R. David Kaylor, *Paul's Covenant Community: Jew and Gentile in Romans* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988), 204.

[105] Herzog, "Dissembling, A Weapon of the Weak," 356.

[106] Cf. H.W. Beyer, "διακονέω, διακονία, κτλ," *TDNT* 2:81-93.

[107] Herzog, "Dissembling, A Weapon of the Weak," 356.

mentioned (διό), one should respect the authority because its source is ultimately God. But again, suggests Herzog, Paul's declaring that the rulers are mere servants of God is denying their divine origins.[108] They are not gods by any means but humans, servants of the God of Israel. Furthermore, he suggests that Rom 13:1-7 is a recollection of Roman propaganda, "a public transcript of the elites."[109] Herzog states, "Paul has produced an ambiguous and coded version of the hidden transcript and described an empire that does not exist."[110] This Roman state, expressed in Rom 13:1-7, does not exist because those who obey do not do so out of good conscience but out of fear of punishment. He claims that Paul's community in Rome knew that the imperial authority was abusive of their military and judicial powers, and they recognized the irony in Paul's words. They knew, on the one hand, the authority not only punished the evil while rewarding the good, but also, on the other hand, punished the good while rewarding the evil.[111]

In the remaining verses of this passage Paul shifts his attention to the question of taxes (φόρος). As Herzog suggests, Paul continues to undermine the deity of the imperial authority by referring to them as λειτουργοί ("servants"), "a variant of *diakonoi*."[112] The role of λειτουργοὶ

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[108] Ibid., 357.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid.

was to carry out the work of the state, that is those public works like the collection of taxes.[113] He categorizes the Roman Empire as a "police state," and police states have three primary areas of concern which are military, financial, and ecclesiastical.[114] So when Paul says to "pay to all people their dues" (ἀπόδοτε πᾶσιν τὰς ὀφειλάς), he is saying just that; give them their due "but no more." As Herzog says, "This implies resistance to conceding to the finance ministers more than is their due. Give no more than absolutely necessary." [115] Romans 13:7 summarizes Paul's position, "Pay to all people their dues, tax to whom tax is due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due." But then again, what does Paul mean by respect and honor? Herzog conjectures, "[Paul] means that Christians should always display the public deference that the oppressed show their masters."[116] But Herzog suggests that Paul, ultimately, is advising the Roman Christians to practice resistance in ways which will not place the community at danger. Paul's seemingly loyal statement about the Roman authority in Rom 13:1-7 is *actually* a hidden transcript for the Roman Christians to understand how they are to live and survive in an authoritarian state.[117]

Herzog's argument is notable because he sees in Rom 13:1-7 a hidden transcript created by means of omission and double meaning. Like the arguments made previously for 1

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[113] Ibid., 357-358. Cf. C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), 247.

[114] Cf. Tom Carney, *the Shape of the Past* (Lawrence: Coronado Press, 1975), 62.

[115] Herzog, "Dissembling, A Weapon of the Weak," 358.

[116] Ibid., 359.

[117] Ibid., 359.

Thessalonians and Philippians, Herzog argues that Paul created hidden transcripts out of fear of persecution by the "police state."[118] Again, Paul would be incorporating ἔμφασις by means of aposiopesis (omission), a subcategory of ἔμφασις, and words with double meanings (διάκονος and λειτουργοί).

Ἔμφασις is produced by aposiopesis when an expression is omitted. The omission is made known by an abrupt stop in the sentence (Quint. *Inst.* 4.54.67). Herzog, as well as others, may conjecture that Paul is omitting a discussion on other aspects of the Roman government only for the audience to fill in what is missing. For example, Herzog states that Paul's community will understand that they are only to appear to be conforming to the authority. Instead Paul is encouraging them, by means of omission, "to practice the art of resistance" in a way that would not jeopardize their community.[119] But the text of Rom 13:1-7 does not indicate Paul is doing such. Omission, or aposiopesis, would suggest that there is some type of abrupt stop or syntactical oddity in the text (Quint. *Inst*. 9.2.54-57). There are none. Rather it is a smooth pericope both grammatically and syntactically.

With regards to ἔμφασις produced by double meanings of words, Quintilian suggests the avoidance of such strategies because it could possibly implicate you in a court (*Inst*. 9.2.69). Ps.-

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[118] The notion that Rome was a police state, actively seeking to persecute dissenters, is much exaggerated. Indeed, prominent citizens and those in the public sphere had to be careful about what they said or did, but Rome did not actively seek out and prosecute dissenters. Even when voluntary associations came under the microscope of Julius Caesar and later Augustus, they did not monitor the communique of local associations since these small groups were highly incapable of subverting the authority of the Caesar. See Wendy Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law: State Restrictions on Voluntary Associations 60 BCE – 200 CE," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World* ed., John S. Kloppenborg and S.G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 74-89.

[119] Herzog, "Dissembling, A Weapon of the Weak," 359.

Hermogenes, however, says that some situations do call for the incorporation of double

meanings but does not specify which situations (*De inv*. 4.13.209). Nonetheless, Herzog

comments that διάκονος, and its "variant" λειτουργός, contain a double meaning. Whereas the

emperor and his authorities may sometimes be recognized as divinities, Paul recognizes them as

mere "servants" of God undermining their authority.

But we must not remove Paul from his Jewish context. Why would Paul, or any Jew for

that matter, regard the emperor or any civil authority as a deity? It would not be shocking to the

emperor, or any other Greco-Roman person for that matter, that a Jew would not recognize the

divinity of the emperor. In fact the emperor Claudius, renewing the decrees of Augustus, decreed

that the Alexandrian Jews should be left alone to worship their own god according to their own

customs (P.Lond.1912).[120] A Jewish text which helps contextualize Paul's place in the Greco-

Roman world comes from Josephus's *Contra Apionem*, a contemporary of Paul.

> He [Moses] did not prohibit that good men be paid homage with other honors, secondary
> to God: with such expressions of respect we give glory to the emperors and to the Roman
> people. We offer on their behalf perpetual sacrifices, and not only do we conduct such

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[120] "… With regard to the responsibility for the disturbances and rioting, or rather to speak the truth, the war, against the Jews, although your ambassadors, particularly Dionysius the son of Theon, argued vigorously and at length in the disputation, I have not wished to make an exact inquiry, but I harbor within me a store of immutable indignation against those renewed the conflict. I merely say that, unless you stop this destructive and obstinate mutual enmity, I shall be forced to show what a benevolent ruler can be when he is turned to righteous indignation. Even now, therefore, I conjure the Alexandrians to behave gently and kindly towards the Jews who have inhabited the same city for many years, and not to dishonor any of their customs in their worship of their god, but to allow them to keep their own ways, as they did in the time of the god Augustus and as I too, having heard both sides, have confirmed. The Jews, on the other hand, I Order not to aim at more than they have previously had and not in future to sent two embassies as if they lived in two cities, a thing which has never been done before, and not to intrude themselves into the games presided over by the *gymnasiarchoi* and the *kosmetai*, since they enjoy what is their own, and in a city which is not their own they possess an abundance of all good things. …" Translation of P.Lond.1912 from Victor A. Tcherikover and Alexander Fuks, eds., *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957-1964), 2.43.

rites every day at the common expense of all Judeans, but we perform no other sacrifices on a common basis, not even for children; it is only for the emperors that we collectively exhibit this exceptional honor, which we render to no (other) human being (Josephus, *C. Ap*. 2.75-76 [Barclay]).[121]

Josephus claims that the Jewish people not only honor the emperor but all the Roman people, second only to their God. They even offer daily sacrifices on behalf of the emperor, an honor which they do not offer to any other person.

Paul's view of the relationship of believers to the Greco-Roman civil authority is emphasized in the greater Jewish tradition as well. For example, Prov 8:15-16 shows his views are not out of the ordinary:

By me [God] kings reign, and sovereigns prescribe what is just; by me nobles are exalted and by me autocrats control the earth [LXX].[122]

This same attitude is found in other Jewish and Hellenistic Jewish texts where the emperor and the Roman people are treated in similar fashion.[123] So is Paul dishonoring the Roman imperial order? Not at all. Paul declaring them "servants" equates them to the other "servants" he mentions in his letters (e.g., Rom 16:1; 1 Cor 3:5.).[124] All serve God, in Paul's Jewish

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[121] Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion: Translation and Commentary*, ed. and trans. John M.G. Barclay (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

[122] The Greek text of the Septuagint is from Alfred Rahlf's (ed.) *Septuaginta* (2006). All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

[123] Cf. Jer 29:7 (36:7 [LXX]); Ezra 6:10; 1 Macc 7:33. Also, *Let. Aris.* 45; Philo, *Legat.* 157; Josephus, *B.J.* 2.197; *C. Ap.* 2.76-77). See Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 397-398.

[124] Notice the unique ascription of this title to Christ as a "servant of the Jews" in Rom 15:8.

understanding, for this is what God has ordained.[125] This was a religiously grounded point of view not only held by Paul but also by the larger Jewish population in the Greco-Roman world.[126] Indeed, Paul is relativizing the role of the authority but how else could a Hellenized Jew describe the authority?[127] As Thomas H. Tobin observes,

> There was nothing absolute about either political power or submission to it. Rather, it was a religiously grounded attitude on the part of a minority group in the Roman empire toward the overwhelming reality of Roman power. It also included a recognition of the value of the relative social and political stability Roman power provided.[128]

Therefore, Romans 13:1-7 must first be understood within the context of the letter as well as its *Sitz im Leben*.

Romans 13:1-7 is often said to be a discussion of the "state" or of Rome but there is neither mention of the "state" nor of Rome. Rather, Romans 13:1-7 is not a standalone passage, as some have suggested, but is part of Paul's larger exhortation in 12:1-15:7. This passage may seem out of place because of its subject matter.[129] Yet there are verbal links to what precedes 13:1-17 and what follows it, such as the contrast between "good" (ἀγαθόν) and "evil" (κακόν) (e.g., 12:2, 9, 17, 21; 13:3, 4; 13:10).[130]

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[125] Cf. Prov 8:15-16; Jer 27:5-7 (34:5-7 [LXX]); Isa 45:1-3; Dan 2:21, 36-38; 4:17; Sir 10:4. Aso, *Let. Aris.* 224; Wis 6:3; Josephus, *B.J.* 2.140; *A.J.*15.374; *C. Ap.* 2.76-77. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Context*, 396. Also Hultgren, *Paul's Letter*, 467.

[126] Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Context*, 398.

[127] Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 472.

[128] Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Context*, 398.

[129] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 662.

[130] Tobin, "*Paul's Rhetoric in Context*," 396-297, esp. 397 n. 40.

Paul is ultimately doing two things in this passage within the context of the larger passage in 12:1-15:7. He is first exhorting the Roman followers of Christ to live a life of morality and harmony, which is emphasized in their freedom from the observance of the Law of Moses. Indeed, this section in Romans is highlighted by what has preceded it, namely God's redemptive work in Christ. Though their old life has ended, a new and more profound life, characterized by the cessation of the Law of Moses, now begins in Christ (Rom 7:1-6). Now that they are in Christ through baptism (Rom 6:1-14), Paul now lays out for the believers how to live a life in Christ. This life includes, but is not limited to, the commandments (Rom 13:9), the call to love one another (Rom 13:8-10), and living by the example of Christ (Rom 15:7-8).[131]

Second, he wants to curtail any divisiveness in the community at large and so admonishes them simply to pay their taxes or revenues. Paul, who is writing in the immediate context of Claudius's exile of the Jews in 41, admonishes the believers that their new life in Christ does not necessarily mean their withdrawal from their civic obligations.[132] As Thomas M. Coleman states, Paul is emphasizing that the Roman faithful have ethical obligations to a wider sphere of binding commitments, not just to their immediate faith community but to the larger world.[133]

The passage in Rom 13:1-7 emphasizes proper engagement in the world; believers, as well as all people, are to recognize that authority derives from God. The civil leaders are servants of

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[131] Hultgren, *Paul's Letter*, 436.

[132] Cf. Marcus Borg, "A New Context for Romans 13," *NTS* 19 (1972); 205-218: J. Freidrich, W. Puhlmann, and P. Stuhlmacher, "Zur historischen Situation und Intention von Rom. 13.1-7," *ZTK* 73 (1976): 131-166: A.J.M. Wedderburn, *The Reason for Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 62.

[133] Thomas H. Coleman, "Binding Obligations in Romans 13:7: A Semantic Field and Social Context," *TynBul* 48 (1997): 307-392.

God. They are administrators of God's powers of rewarding the good and punishing the evil, an idea which is not foreign within Judaism. Furthermore, the believer lives within this world which is under the control of a civic government; their new life in Christ does not exempt them from their civic responsibilities.[134] This relationship between Paul's community and their wider Greco-Roman environment will be developed further in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Conclusion

A postcolonial interpretation of the Pauline corpus hinges on several presuppositions; Paul, a follower of Christ, wrote amid a dominant Greco-Roman culture and if he speaks against it, he will be persecuted. Therefore, Paul must incorporate figured speech into his letters not only to encourage his communities to remain faithful but also to avoid detection by the Roman authority when he criticizes them. This postcolonial interpretation has produced many studies which deserve careful analysis. But they seem to overlook two very important aspects of Pauline-studies: Paul's use of Greco-Roman rhetoric and Paul's Jewishness.

As Hans Dieter Betz showed in his commentary on Galatians, Paul is indebted to the ancient schools of Greco-Roman rhetoric.[135] Therefore, if one is arguing that Paul has incorporated figured speech into his letters, we must test this claim against the ancient rhetorical strategies for creating and utilizing figured speech. I have shown that ancient rhetoricians like Quintilian, Ps.-Cicero, Ps.-Hermogenes, and Ps.-Dionysius recognize three types of figured speech: ἔμφασις, πλάγιον, and ἐναντίον. Each of these rhetorical categories was used in

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[134] Ibid., 475.

[135] Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 14-15, 24-25.

particular situations. Of the three, our primary focus was on ἔμφασις since it is the only category

of figured speech which ancient rhetoricians suggested to be used in situations when it was

unsafe to speak freely. Some interpreters argued that because Paul could not speak openly

against the Roman authority, he had to incorporate figured speech into his letters. In the three

Pauline passages which some political interpreters readily suggest as containing a *hidden*

transcript, 1 Thess 2:13-16, Phil 3, and Rom 13:1-7, Paul does not actually employ any of the

rhetorical methods for creating ἔμφασις or other types of figured speech.

Furthermore, because of his Jewishness it should strike us as odd that Paul would be

incorporating figured in the context of empire. The Roman Empire recognized the Jews as

having a long-standing tradition and understood that the Jews did not recognize the emperor as a

god.[136] It was a mutual understanding, though their relationship was far from perfect.[137] That did

not mean they did not honor or respect the emperor, or the civil authority. With regard to

Romans 13:1-7, Palestinian Jewish literature as well as Hellenistic Jewish literature only bolsters

Paul's claims in this passage. To honor a pagan king, or emperor, is not out of the ordinary for

the Jewish people but is encouraged due to God's role in this respect. It is God who ordained

these people to positions of power. Therefore, by revering their civil authorities they are

ultimately honoring God.

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[136] Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 1999), 296-332; John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediteranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1996), 55-60.

[137] E.g., see Sandra Gambetti, *The Alexandrian Riots of 38CE and the Persecution of the Jews: A Historical Reconstruction* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

We should not be surprised that postcolonial readings of Paul, as well as other parts of the New Testament, have been a more recent phenomenon in biblical exegesis. Cold War tensions and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 have both led to a restructuring of the world's authoritative powers. This includes the formation of many new democracies as well as the emergence of human rights groups in countries where human rights were only promised to one group of people (e.g., the United States and South Africa).[138] The challenge, I think, of these political interpretations is to offer interpretations which open pathways of enhancing human freedom and dignity.[139] Yet the emphasis one notices in much of Pauline postcolonial scholarship is that there is not weight placed on human dignity and freedom, but rather on the subversion of radical political powers. On the contrary, Paul structured his communities in such a way that it complemented Greco-Roman society, but remained unique in its call to all peoples, regardless of their race, sex, or creed. Most especially is his call to follow Jesus Christ. This study will proceed to situate Paul in his proper Greco-Roman context. Particularly, in what ways did the Roman Empire emerge in the eastern Hellenic provinces and in what ways did the empire express its relationship with the local populations?

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[138] Bernard C. Lategan, "The Quality of Young Democracies from a Constitutional Perspective," in *Democracy Under Scrutiny: Elites, Citizens, Cultures*, ed. U.J. Van Beck (Opladen: Barbara Budrich, 2010), 95-114.

[139] Lategan, "Romans 13:7," 269.

CHAPTER THREE

ROMAN IMPERIALISM AND FOREIGN CULTS

Introduction

Conceptions of the Roman Empire within modern academic discussions are often anachronistic.

Drawing on 18th and 19th century models of Western European imperialism, some have

understood ancient Rome's conquests in a similar fashion. They understand the Roman Empire's

relationship to the larger world in terms of "colonizers" and "colonized."[1] Several proposals have

been offered to explain why Republican Rome often fought in wars: they had a drive for

domination; they fought only in defense of themselves and their allies; they fought for economic

reasons.[2]

Indeed, there were certainly definite economic and military advantages on conquering a

new territory, but evidence from the middle to late Republic (264 – 30 BCE), and early

Principate (27 BCE – 14 CE) reveals conquest for the sake of military honorifics. An honorific is

a title which confers or conveys esteem and respect for a position of rank when addressing a

person. In the Republican era, military honorifics were requisites for an aristocrat if he sought

political power. A year without war could potentially hinder a Roman aristocrat from seeking

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[1] E.g., John A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965); Vladimir I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism: A Popular Outline* (New York: International Publishers, 1939).

[2] E.g., Joseph Schumpter, *The Economics and Sociology of Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

political office. Military campaigns were, therefore, necessary because they were the main

contributing factors for an aristocrat to secure political power. But when the Principate was

inaugurated by Caesar Augustus, Rome's drive for conquest came to a gradual halt. This

standstill in major military campaigns was due, in part, to Augustus's reform of the Republic.

The expansionary polices and warfare model of Rome sees a significant change during

the transition from the Republic to the Principate . This transition is, ultimately, a reconfiguration

of the political system. The emerging stabilization of the Roman Empire had major consequences

to Rome's relationship towards foreign peoples and their religious traditions. Because the empire

understood itself as a benevolent guardian, Rome suggested that its rule was in the best interest

of all people (see e.g., Vergil, *Aen*. 6.851-853). But if foreign peoples, or their cults, try to

undermine or subvert Roman power, they would be swiftly, sometimes violently, dealt with.

In this chapter, we will inquire into how Rome transitioned from a senatorial Republic to

an imperial power. This will allow us to better understand how, over a period of several

centuries, Rome reconsidered its relationship to foreign nations and peoples. By the time of the

Principate , the city of Rome and the surrounding communities in the rest of Italy, was a multi-

ethnic state unified under Roman authority. Each group of people brought with them their own

cults and traditions. Some cults would often come under suspicion, such as the cult of Bacchus,

because of their late-night ceremonies. Others were overtly targeted because of the cult's

political ties with an enemy state, such as the cult of Isis because of its connections to Egypt. I

shall therefore survey Rome's relationship to several foreign cults: the cult of Bacchus, the cult

of Isis, and the cult of Yahweh (Judaism). What this investigation will reveal is that a foreign

cult would be tolerated, insofar as it did not undermine Roman authority, cause civic unrest, or

undermine the ancient gods of Rome. If a foreign cult should rouse the suspicion of the authorities, it would be mercilessly targeted until it was no longer considered a threat.

Transitioning from Republic to Empire

Roman Imperialism

Introduction

During the age of the Roman Republic, war was an annual ritualized event. War, to a great extent, was enmeshed in the Republic's civic life. Due to almost four centuries of constant war the Republic gained power, wealth, and new territories. Arguments have been offered to explain why they actively sought combat. Some have argued economically for their drive to war, suggesting that Rome was in many ways dependent on plunder.[3] Others have offered a defensive model, suggesting that Rome only fought when the city or its allies were under threat of attack.[4] In some situations, these arguments are quite valid, but they cannot alone explain Rome's warfare ethos and their drive for power (*imperium*). Rather, as I will attempt to show, Rome's desire for war was a combination of these models. Moreover, it will be shown how military campaigns were crucial for the election to public office. In the Republic, aristocrats who sought public office were required to have served in (numerous) military campaigns. Yet, when the emperor Augustus inaugurates the Principate, this lust for imperium comes to a gradual halt.

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[3] Cf. Tenney Frank, "Mercantilism and Rome's Foreign Policy," *AHR* 18 (1912-1913): 233-252; Ibid., *Roman Imperialism* (New York: Macmillan, 1914), 277-297.

[4] Theodor Mommsen, *The Provinces of the Roman Empire from Caesar to Diocletian*, 2 vols., trans. William P. Dickson (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1887); Maurice Holleaux, *Rome, la Grèce et les monarchies hellénistiques au IIIe siècle avant J. C. (273-205)*, BEHEH (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1921): Frank, *Roman Imperialism*, *passim*. Cf. William V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome: 327 – 70 B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 163-166.

What follows is a description of these models, including a minor inquiry into the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, to help explain Rome's ultimate drive for war and the eventual slackening of that drive.

Economic Gains and War

In the last century, scholarship on the Roman Empire was influenced by modern political consciousness, and by historically recent forces of imperialism.[5] But did Rome necessarily conceive of "empire" as we do, that is to say, as a direct control by the state over other peoples and lands which were acquired by means of annexation, occupation, and exploitation? Erich Gruen observes,

> Romans threw their weight around in certain places and at certain times; on occasion they exercised firm authority, barked commands, carried off the wealth of a state. On other occasions and under other circumstances, they shunned involvement or decision, showed little interest in tangible gain, and shrank even from anything that can be characterized as "hegemony."[6]

So, in some ways ancient Rome did reflect our contemporary notions of "empire," but in some other ways it did not. Considering the Greek cities of Asia Minor under Roman rule; it was a rare occurrence to see Rome interfere in the internal affairs of those Hellenized communities.

During the middle Republic (264 – 133 CE), Rome preserved or granted free status to certain Greek cities in return for their loyalty in wars against Rome's adversaries.[7] These cities

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[5] Andrew Erskine, *Roman Imperialism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 3. See also Erich S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, 2 vols. (Berkley: University of California Press, 1984), 1.1-12.

[6] Gruen, *The Hellenistic World*, 1.273.

[7] With regards to Philip V of Macedon see Polybius, *Hist.* 18.47.10-13; Livy, *Ad urbe condita* 7.12.4. Antiochus III; *Syll.³* 618.10-12; Polybius, *Hist.* 21.46.1-2; Livy, *Ad urbe condita* 38.39.7-17. The Achaean League: Pausanias, *Descr.* 7.16.9. Mithradates: *Syll.³* 785 (=*IGR* IV943). See Sviatoslav Dmitriev, *City Government in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 308. Especially 308 n. 90.

had administrative independence, but this was not necessarily accompanied by political independence.[8] If these free cities were politically and socially stable, paid their taxes, and contributed to the needs of Rome's military, Rome refrained from interfering in their internal politics and administration.[9] As P. A. Brunt observes, "it was not the practice of the Romans to govern much. The governor had only a small staff, and he did little more than defend his province, ensure the collection of the taxes and decide the most important criminal and civil cases. The local communities were left in the main to run their own affairs."[10]

Regarding annexed territories, Rome's ultimate concern was how these territories could support Rome's military. Among Rome's allies, the need for troops was the only obligation of their alliance.[11] But these foreign troops, *socii*, although they could not be expected to be automatically loyal to Rome, were essential. Arnaldo Momigliano comments,

> As military obligations were the only visible tie between Rome and the allies, Rome had to make the most of these obligations lest they became meaningless or, worse, lest the allied armies turn against Rome. … the organization of the Italian alliance had its own logic – no tribute and therefore maximum military partnership.[12]

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[8] Dmitriev, *City Government*, 310.

[9] Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 1.210. Also, Dmitriev, *City Government*, 310.

[10] P.A. Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 116-117.

[11] Compare to the Athenian empire, whose allies paid tribute. See Erskine, *Roman Imperialism*, 15. On tribute in the Athenian empire, see Adalberto Giovanni "The Parthenon, the Treasury of Athena, and the Tribute of the Allies," in *The Athenian Empire*, ed. Polly Low (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2008), 164-184.

[12] Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 45.

Among the provinces loyalty to Rome was encouraged externally, by the Roman officers, and internally, by the allied aristocracy.[13] In exchange for their loyalty, the *socii* were rewarded with glory, plunder, and land. This structure of alliance, which included the possible benefits of war, was a means for encouraging continued military campaigns. War led to more alliances, and the allies benefited from booty. In this manner, the Roman Republic conquered the Italian and Greek lands while, simultaneously, creating an infrastructure of power.[14]

It must be noted that the state economy of the late Republic (147 – 30 BCE) and early Empire was not solely dependent upon the plunder (*praeda*) of war. Victory in war did mean a large amount of booty. The Roman army had regulations in place for the distribution of *praeda* (see Polybius, *Hist*. 10.16.1-9). Though the public coffers did benefit from the spoils of war, the state economy could not depend in any reliable way on this type of income.[15] The Roman state did not receive priority in matters of *praeda*. Those who had first claim to *praeda* were to those soldiers who captured it, and the generals of war also distributed the spoils to those involved in the battle.[16] Gruen observes that plunder meant private gains for officers and soldiers, but these profits were not a source of steady income for the state.[17]

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Erskine, *Roman Imperialism*, 15-16.

[15] Gruen, *The Hellenistic World*, 1.290.

[16] Ibid., 1.291. For more information on how generals distributed the spoils of war see Israel Shatzman, "The Roman General's Authority Over Booty," *Hist* 21 (1972): 177-205: also, J. Bradford Churchill, "Ex Qua Vellent Facerent: Roman Magistrates' Authority Over Praeda and Manubiae," *TAPA* 129 (1999): 85-116.

[17] Gruen, *The Hellenistic World*, 1.291.

So, if the driving force for Roman imperialism was more than economic, then what was it? Three differing views have been offered as a response to this question. These views are, (1) Rome had a drive for conquest, (2) Rome only sought power to defend the state, or (3) aristocratic triumph and glory.[18] I will argue that these views are inadequate on their own. Aristocratic competition for military honorifics, however, is central. One notices how this type of competition begins to cease during the transition from the senatorial Republic to the imperial system of the Principate. The glory and triumph which was once associated with aristocrats in Republican Rome became the sole entitlement now of the imperial family.

Conquest and Defensive Imperialism

Scholars like Theodor Mommsen, Maurice Holleaux, and Tenney Frank have all argued that Rome did not intentionally seek world domination. They argue for a defensive interpretation: Rome did not intentionally seek imperium but sought security.[19] As Andrew Erskine observes, this model was championed in the mid-twentieth century, when countries like Britain and France took possession of overseas territories which helped spin a positive view on ancient Roman *imperialism*.[20] Simply put, Rome unintentionally became an imperialist force. Erskine observes that American scholarship of the last century supported this defensive model as well, possibly a consequence of both World Wars and the Cold War.[21]

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[18] See Erskine, *Roman Imperialism*, 33-47.

[19] Mommsen, *The Provinces of the Roman Empire from Caesar to Diocletian*; Maurice Holleaux, *Rome, la Grèce et les monarchies hellénistiques au IIIe siècle avant J. C. (273-205);* Frank, *Roman Imperialism*.

[20] Erskine, *Roman Imperialism*, 37.

[21] Ibid.

The first scholar to challenge the defensive model was William V. Harris, who, in 1979, suggested that the defensive model is argued based on particular wars rather than the whole history of the Middle Republic.[22] Harris concludes saying, "we have encountered little evidence of wars which the Romans fought primarily to ward off a long-range strategic danger to their empire as a whole. … the only war which might fit easily into this category is the war against Hannibal."[23] As Harris shows, the defensive imperialism model is argued on notions of Roman just law and fetial law.[24]

The *fetiales*, as explained in ancient literature,[25] was a college of twenty priests who were concerned with the procedures of declaring war.[26] The priests are said to have overseen the religious aspects during transitional times between peace and war.[27] Ultimately, the actions

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[22] Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 110-111, esp.163-166. Cf. Moses I. Finley, "Empire in the Greco-Roman World," *GR* 25 (1978):1-15; Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves,* Sociological Studies in Roman History 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

[23] Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 253.

[24] Cf. J.W. Rich, *Declaring War in the Roman Republic in the Period of Transmarine Expansion* (Brussels: Latomus, 1976); Sigrid Albert, *Bellum iustum: die Theorie des "gerechten Krieges" und ihre praktische Bedeutung für die auswärtigen Auseinandersetzungen Roms in republikanischer Zeit*, Frankfurter althistorische Studien 10 (Kallmünz: Lassleben, 1980).

[25] E.g. Livy, *Ad urbe condita*, 1.32.5-10; Cicero, *Off.*, 1.34-36.

[26] Federico Santangelo makes an important comment on the *fetiales* suggesting, "What matters most is that the institution of the fetials is said to have served in the development of the early expansion of Rome. … [the fetials] were a religious institution that could also have a political function, by negotiating with the neighbouring populations the circumstances that could potentially lead to war … the fetials could act as 'peace-makers': one of their tasks was to explore the ways that could solve a controversy and avoid the war." See Santangelo, "The Fetials and Their 'Ius,'" *BIHR* 51 (2008): 63-93, quote on p. 66.

[27] Erskine, *Roman Imperialism*, 38. Also Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 166.

performed by the *fetiales* were primarily intended to shift the blame for war to the enemy, thus allowing the Roman declaration of war to be both pious and just.[28] Then the enemy would be given the opportunity to make amends for their non-compliance with Rome or its allies. If their demands were not met, the *fetiales* would perform the proper ritual for declaring war. Some scholars, therefore, recognize the fetial laws as Rome's unwillingness to fight wars unless the war itself was perceived as defensive.[29]

The fetial laws were therefore instruments for setting a war into action. Erskine suggests that the primary function of the fetial laws was religious in nature and had the potential of promoting peace. But it also became a means of "self-righteous aggression."[30] The defensive model argued that Rome was reluctant to pursue war and to annex territory, but only did so when their hand was forced. Harris's detailed investigation of the Republican wars from 327 to 70 BCE shows that some battles, such as when the Gauls in 284/283 BCE and in 225 BCE attacked Rome at Arretium and Telamon respectively, were fought in pure defense of Rome and its citizens. But, as it will be shown in the following section, the majority of wars were fought to serve the interest of the aristocracy.[31] Rome was eager to annex territory but did so only when it was practical.[32]

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[28] Walter Moskalew, "Fetial Rituals and the Rhetoric of the Just War," *Classical Outlook* 67 (1990): 105-110, esp. 107.

[29] Frank, *Roman Imperialism*, 9. Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 166.

[30] Erskine, *Roman Imperialism*, 39.

[31] Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 253.

[32] Erskine, *Roman Imperialism*, 39.

Rome eventually gained a vast empire, but to base this acquisition on a lust for imperium or on account of self-defense does not necessarily explain why Rome so often sought wars. In the early and middle Republic (458 - 133 BCE), warfare was formative in the lives of Romans. From the age of seventeen, a young Roman aristocrat would begin schooling which was heavily focused in war and military command.[33] To become a man of renown, one had to achieve praise and glory (*laus* and *gloria*). The pre-eminent source of which was victory in battle and other military achievements.[34]

Praise, Glory, and the *Res gestae divi Augusti*

War was built into the fabric of the Roman Republic, so much so that it became an essential part of the aristocrat's life. The greatest distinction a young aristocrat could obtain was accessible only by means of warfare.[35] Military achievement was the pre-eminent source of praise and glory. Yet, as Harris observes, there was a shift of power within Roman society as the Republic transitioned into the Principate. Ultimately, he says, "foreign wars and expansion gradually ceased to be the preoccupations of the Roman aristocracy and the citizen body, and became instead specialized policy of certain 'great men' and their followers."[36] Tim Cornell expands on this observation and suggests that the entire institution of war-making, "its frequency, intensity, and duration, and its nature and function within society," were significantly different in the first century CE than it was previously in the Republic. Furthermore, Cornell

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[33] Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 14.

[34] Ibid., 20.

[35] Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 20.

[36] Ibid., 5.

suggests that the transformation was not sudden but was a gradual change which did not take full effect until the death of the emperor Augustus.[37] The Republic, until the first century CE, sought war not only for the sake of imperialism and wealth, but also for the sake of military honorifics. When Augustus inaugurates the Principate, Roman society and its aristocracy were no longer defined by a warfare ethos. Now, only the emperor and the imperial family could acclaim military glory.

The central importance of glory and military honorifics during the Republican era are evident in sources of first century BCE. Cicero, in *De off.*, recalls the traditional Roman ethos surrounding "great men." He says that men of renown are recognized in three ways, which are to make a career of defending law suits, leading an assembly, and to make war (*De off.* 1.121).[38] Indeed, as reflected in Cicero, the most notable thing a Roman could do in the Republic was to seek success and glory which were primarily secured through military campaigns.[39] In one of his rhetorical works, Cicero suggests that the greatest men are judged by their achievements in war. He says,

> Who, for instance, in seeking to measure the understanding possessed by illustrious men, whether by the usefulness or the grandeur of their achievements, would not place the general above the orator? Yet who could doubt that, from this country alone, we could

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[37] Tim Cornell, "The End of Roman Imperial Expansion," in *War and Society in the Roman World*, eds. John Rich and Graham Shipley (London: Routledge, 1993), 139-170, esp. 154. See also Erskine, *Roman Imperialism*, 40.

[38] si igitur non poterit sive causas defensitare sive populum contionibus tenere sive bella gerer … (Cicero, *De off.* 1.121).

[39] John Rich, "Fear, Greed, and Glory: The Causes of Roman War-Making in the Middle Republic," in *War and Society in the Roman World*, eds. John Rich and Graham Shipley (London: Routledge, 1993), 38-69, esp. 49-54.

cite almost innumerable examples of leaders in war of the greatest distinction, but of men
excelling in oratory a mere handful? (*De or.* 1.7 [Sutton, LCL]).

Cicero states here that the pre-eminent sources of fame are military achievements.[40] Though the

first century BCE saw a change in the nature of war and imperialism, it was still understood that

the greatest men of Rome were the military heroes of old (Cicero, *Mur.* 19-30).[41]

The pursuit of praise and glory was vital for the Roman aristocracy. The Roman elite

were immersed in a constant struggle for such prestige during the early and middle Republic.[42]

Even Latin political vocabulary highlights this ethos; abstract nouns like *dignitas*, *auctoritas*,

maiestas, *honor,* not only imply the possession of honor but also its effectiveness in the lives of

the Romans.[43]

Competition among the aristocracy, as well as the warfare ethos, in Republican society

drove Roman imperialism by an almost continuous demand for war, wherein the elite could

obtain praise and glory. Harris has shown that after 327 BCE it was rare that Rome did not

engage in a yearly battle.[44] Stephen Oakley observes that from 415 to 265 BCE, Rome did not

commit to war only for thirteen years.[45] Also, Polybius reports that in order for one to hold

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[40] Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 22.

[41] Cf. Claude Nicolet, "'Consul Togatus:' Remarques sur le Vocabulaire Politique de Cicéron et de Tite-Live," *REL* 38: 236-254.

[42] Erskine, *Roman Imperialism*, 40.

[43] J. E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 272-276.

[44] Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 9-10.

[45] Stephen Oakley, "The Roman Conquest of Italy," in *War and Society in the Roman World*, eds. John Rich and Graham Shipley (London: Routledge, 1993), 9-37, esp. 15-16.

political office in Rome, he must have completed ten military campaigns (*Hist.* 6.19.4).[46] Even if

one regards Polybius's observation as an exaggeration, it is still clear that many years of military

service were still a prerequisite to hold political office in Rome.[47]

The most visible and striking manifestation of Roman honors and militaristic victories

was the Republican *triumphal procession* (*pompa triumphalis*).[48] When a Roman commander

would lead an army into battle, once he stepped outside the boundary of Rome, the *pomerium*, he

possessed absolute power over the soldiers.[49] In the eyes of the soldiers, and of the senate, the

Roman commander became a 'Republican king' during the military campaign; he chose the fate

of his soldiers and made all the decisions in the campaign. If the campaign was successful, the

commander along with the soldiers gained plunder and slaves. Upon victory, the commander

would send a message back to the senate making them aware of this victory. The message

signified that the commander was ready to return to Rome, subsequently losing his powerful

position abroad. The senate met with the commander and his soldiers, outside of Rome on the

Campus Martrius, to hear in detail his exploits which were done on behalf of the Republic. If

there were no objections to the commander, the senate voted in favor of the *triumph*.[50]

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[46] πολιτικὴν δὲ λαβεῖν ἀρχὴν οὐκ ἔξεστιν οὐδενὶ πρότερον, ἐὰν μὴ δέκα στρατείας ἐνιαυσίους ἦ τετελεκώς (Polybius, *Hist*. 6.19.4).

[47] Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 11.

[48] I am indebted to the work of Itgenshorst, for her detailed description of the Republican Triumph. See Tanja Itgenshorst, "Roman Commanders and Hellenistic Kings: On the 'Hellenization' of the Republican Triumph," *AncSoc* 36 (2006): 51-68.

[49] Cf., Roger Antaya, "The Etymology of Pomerium" *AJP* (1980): 184-189; M.T. Boatwright, "The Pomerial Extension of Augustus," *Hist* (1986): 13-27.

[50] Ibid., 63-64.

The *pompa triumphalis* was a procession of sorts. The military commander, being

granted a triumph, crossed back into Rome where he was preceded by his army, his plunder, his

prisoners of war, up to the Capitolium where he would offer a victim to Jupiter Optimus

Maximus.[51] In a manner evoking pious sensibilities, the triumphal commander was led into the

city, mounted on a quadriga dressed in kingly garb, reminiscent of Jupiter himself (see e.g.,

Athenaeus, *Deipn*. 5.201 C-D). The people not only witnessed the glory of the commander but

witnessed the dominance of Rome over their enemies. Prisoners of war, who were led in chains

in procession, could include the conquered rulers themselves. These prisoners were often

executed. Furthermore, the names of conquered tribes, lands, and peoples were paraded on

signs.[52] Ultimately, the *pompa triumphalis* was a ritual wherein all commanders were celebrated

as 'great men,' no matter the amount of plunder or slaves recovered. Every victorious

commander was permitted to enjoy this position. But once the ritual ended, the commander

would lay aside his role and return to his normal life.

The late Republic had high regard for military service. Military service was an

indispensable qualification for public office and was the mark of success of a Roman aristocrat.

During the early Principate, however, most senators and other public officials had very little to

no military experience. Those who did have some level of expertise would likely not take part in

any combat.[53] This is not to say that Rome did not engage in military activity in the late first

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[51] Ibid., 66. Jupiter was always the chief god of triumph and his temples were always the goal of
the *pompa triumphalis*. See Larissa Bonfante Warren, "Roman Triumphs and Etruscan Kings: The
Changing Face of the Triumph," *JRS* 60 (1970): 49-66, 54.

[52] Erskine, *Roman Imperialism*, 41.

[53] Cornell, "The End of Roman Imperial Expansion," 165.

century BCE or the first century CE. At that time, however, expansion seemed to cease, and the military was almost exclusively positioned in the provinces, in distant places away from most Romans. Cornell observes, "The effect of these developments was that Italy and the inner provinces of the empire were gradually demilitarized, and the warlike tradition of the Roman people faded out of existence."[54] What was left of this warfare ethos remained in reconstructions of past battles in the writings of ancient historians and orators, as well as in gladiatorial spectacles.[55]

Aristocratic competition for *laus* and *gloria* in the military field became redundant once Augustus inaugurated the Principate. The achievements of the emperor Augustus, which are recalled in *Res gestae divi Augusti*, demonstrate the emperor as the greatest of all men past and present. In the *Res gest. divi Aug.*, no one could surpass the emperor, whether it be in honorifics, military achievements, or benefaction. Therefore, lust for war and imperialism among the aristocracy came to a gradual halt.

The Res gestae divi Augusti

The *Res gest. divi Aug.* is an autobiographical aretalogy of the emperor Augustus.[56] The document, written primarily in the first person, is an account of how Augustus balances honors

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[54] Ibid., 165.

[55] On the gladiatorial games see, Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-30. For a discussion on the possible non-literary sources for the interpretation of the New Testament see, Alan Cadwallader, "Assessing the Potential of Archaeological Discoveries for the Interpretation of New Testament Texts: The Case of a Gladiator Fragment from Colossae and the Letter to the Colossians," in *The First Urban Churches 1: Methodological Foundations*, eds. James R. Harrison and L. L. Welborn (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 41-66.

[56] Cf., Ronald T. Riley, *The Emperor's Retrospect: Augustus' Res Gestae in Epigraphy, Historiography, and Commentary*, StHell 39 (Leuven: Peeters, 2003).

and his position in Rome, along with his achievements and his role as benefactor.[57] The *Res gest.*
divi Aug. serves as a summary of Augustus's public life. Originally, it was engraved on two
bronze tablets and placed in front of his mausoleum. These bronze tablets have yet to be
discovered. However, the text itself was preserved in Latin, as well as being translated into
Greek. Extant text comes from inscriptions on monuments from eastern Galatia. The
Monumentum Ancyranum is the largest inscription of the *Res gest. divi Aug.* and was found on
the walls of a mosque, located in Ankara, Turkey, which had formerly served as a temple to the
goddess Roma and Augustus.[58]

It is important to note that Augustus does not maintain his rule over the empire by appeal
to some divine right. Rather, it was Rome, the senate, and the people who acknowledged
Augustus's authority on account of the superior benefits he conferred upon them.[59] Though much
can be said about the *Res gest. divi Aug.*, I shall highlight only a few points that relate directly to
the notions of imperium, *laus* and *gloria*.

The *Res gest. divi Aug.* is an autobiographical story of how Augustus came to acquire
complete dominance, *imperium*, over the empire. The first sentence begins with, then, Octavian
having no power and how he begins to acquire it by means of his virtues. The honors that he

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[57] P.A. Brunt ad J.M. Moore, introduction to *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, by Augustus, trans. P.A.
Brunt and J. M. Moore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 4.

[58] Cynthia Damon, ed., *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (Bryn Mawr: Bryn Mawr Commentaries, 1995),
1. Also, Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament
Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982), 257.

[59] Danker, *Benefactor*, 256-257.

immediately receives on account of his virtue shows his power growing.**60** His authority was also increased by his military conquests. Chapters twenty-five through thirty recount some of his greatest military triumphs. He says,

> I cleared the sea of pirates, and in that same war I handed over to their masters for punishment nearly 30,000 slaves who had run away from their owners and had taken up arms against the Republic (5.25.1-3). … I extended the frontiers of all Rome's provinces that were bounded by peoples who were not under our imperial sway … I ended hostilities in the Alps – from the region that is closest to the Adriatic Sea to the lands bordering the Tuscan Sea – without a single tribe suffering exposure to unjust war. (5.26.9-10, 13) … Egypt I added to the domain of the Roman people … (5.27.24) … Before my Principate no army of the Roman people had ever advanced as far as the Pannonian Tribes, but through Tiberius Nero, who was then my stepson and legate, I conquered them and made them subjects of the Empire of the Roman people; and I extended the frontiers of Illyricum to the banks of the Danube River (5.30.44-46).**61**

What one notices here and throughout the *Res gest. divi Aug.* is Augustus does not share his authority. Even the victory won by Tiberius Nero was Augustus's to claim since he commanded the military. No one else had achieved what he had, and no one succeeded in military campaigns as much as he had. Furthermore, the *Res gest. divi Aug.* presents both the senate and the people going about their daily lives in normal Republican manner while Augustus moves through the document as the supreme ruler who displays his supreme authority.**62**

In the transition from senatorial Republic to the imperial system of the Principate, and as is reflected in the *Res gest. divi Aug.*, one's political office was dependent more on the patronage of the emperor than on military triumphs. Though some major military campaigns were still conducted during Augustus's reign, these were conducted by the emperor himself or one of his

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60 Edwin S. Ramage, *The Nature and Purpose of Augustus' "Res Gestae,"* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1987), 48.

61 Translation of *Res Gestae Divi Augustus* is from Danker, *Benefactor*, 258-269.

62 Ramage, *The Nature and Purpose*, 52.

legates in remote areas of the empire. With regard to battles fought during the Principate Cornell observes that, "Military commands gave prestige and public recognition to members of the imperial family, helped to secure the loyalty of the armies to Caesar's heirs, and served to legitimize dynastic succession."[63] The *Res gest. divi Aug.* ultimately expresses how glory and triumph belonged to the emperor and the imperial family alone.

Summary

The Roman Republic depended on war to keep its social order intact. War brought in money, slaves, territory, and gave them imperium. War also brought with it honors, praise, and glory for the victorious commanders. The ultimate goal for the Roman who sought political office was the ceremony of the *triumph*. In the *triumph*, the commander was elevated, for one day, to the place of the gods and revered as was Jupiter. A competition ensued among the aristocrats with regards to *laus* and *gloria*, which were primarily obtained by successful military campaigns. In numerous ways, the driving force for *imperium* was initiated by a search for military honorifics in order to hold public office. A year without war meant a year without a *triumph*, which could hinder one's political success. Yet, the drive for imperium fades away in light of Augustus's rise to emperor.

However, the *Res gestae divi Augustus* reveals Augustus to be the ultimate consul which no one in history has or will ever surpass. Augustus transforms the *laus* and *gloria* given yearly to a commander in the Republic, to an unsurpassable *laus* and *gloria* attributed only to the emperor and the imperial family. For these reasons, no military leader of the past could ever compare to Augustus. What emerges as a result of Augustus's rise to power is a gradual

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[63] Cornell, "The End of Roman Imperial Expansion," 162.

cessation of frequent major military campaigns. One reason for this slackening is there was no longer a need for military competition among the aristocracy. An elected official was no longer required to have served in any military campaign, as opposed to the ten campaigns required during the Republic as reported by Polybius.

What remains to be discussed is Rome's attitudes toward its foreign neighbors. The *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* suggests that when it was safe, policy would allow conquered peoples to remain in or return to their territory under the imperium of Rome (*Res Ges*. 1.3). Many of these peoples brought their foreign deities and cultic practices to Rome. What was Rome's attitude toward foreign cults in Rome and across the eastern provinces of the empire? The following section will enquire into Rome's relationship with the cult of Bacchus, the cult of Isis, and the cult of Yahweh (Judaism) to better understand how Rome conceived of its relationship to these foreign cults.

Rome and Foreign Cults

Bacchus, Isis, and Judaism

Introduction

With regard to religion, the Roman Empire did not systematically replace native cults with Roman religion. Instead, there was an integration of Roman religion with those of the native peoples.[64] In the third-century CE, Minucius Felix, a Christian writer, suggests that the reason the Roman Empire was so successful in the past was because of its receptivity to foreign cults. He writes,

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[64] J.S. Richardson, "Imperium Romanum: Empire and the Language of Power," *JRS* 81 (1990): 1-9.

When they have captured a town, even in the fierceness of victory, the Romans respect the deities of the conquered people. They invite to Rome gods from all over the world and make them their own, raising altars even to unknown gods and to the shades of the dead. And thus, while the Romans were adopting the religious rites of all the nations, they also earned for themselves dominion (*Oct.* 6.2-3).[65]

Minucius Felix alludes to the fact that Rome, as well as the rest of Italy, became a multi-ethnic state unified by Roman citizenship. Rome was able to unite the people by means of religious commonalities. Furthermore, the city of Rome adopted foreign deities and assimilated foreign festivals with their Roman customs.

In the late first century BCE, Dionysius of Halicarnassus reflects on Rome's relationship to foreign peoples and their gods. He writes,

And, the thing which I myself have marveled at most, the innumerable nations which have come into Rome who are compelled to worship the gods of their fathers according to their own customs, yet the city has never officially adopted any of those foreign practices, as has been the experience of many cities in the past; but, even though she has, in pursuance of oracles, brought in rites beside her rites, she celebrates them in accordance with her own traditions, after casting-out the legendary pedantry (*Ant. rom.* 2.19.3[Cary, LCL]).[66]

By the first century BCE, Rome was a multi-ethnic city. Though foreign peoples brought with them their religious rights and practices, Rome did not forbid or ostracize the foreigners because of their customs. Notice how Rome was not only open to foreign cults, but also incorporated foreign deities into their festivals. One may conjecture that if some foreign deity became popular among the native inhabitants of Rome, Romans would honor that foreign deity according to their own cultic practices. Clifford Ando observes that the Roman imperial government incorporated

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[65] Translation in Valerie M. Warrior, ed., *Roman Religion: A Sourcebook* (Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2002), 84.

[66]Modified translation.

foreign deities because they "sought to advertise to its subjects the existence of a shared history and a common political theology: the history was that of Rome in the era of her empire and the one constant in the religious firmament was the emperor."[67] Rome did not seek to subvert local peoples' customs, in so far as they posed no threat to the Roman Empire, but rather incorporated local peoples and their customs to those of the wider empire.

To help illustrate Rome's affiliation with foreign cults, this chapter will proceed to analyze Rome's relationship to the cult of Bacchus, the cult of Isis, and the cult of Yahweh. Each of these cults show, in different ways, how Rome engages foreign peoples and their gods. Rome tolerated foreign cults insofar as they did not come under suspicion of seeking to disrupt Rome's political and religious system. It should be noted that the purpose of the following section is not to give a detailed account of the myth and development of these cults. Instead, it will give a brief description of the cult noting the ways in which Rome reacted to them.

Cult of Bacchus

Rome greatly expanded its imperium from the time of the middle Republic to the beginnings of the Principate. During this expansionist movement, Rome did not place pressures on subjugated peoples to *convert*. This sentiment was not because of Rome's unlikely respect of diversity or religious freedom, but because there was no *religion* to which a subjugated people could convert. James Rives explains, "the Graeco-Roman tradition was not a cohesive system of integrated practices and beliefs, but instead involved overlapping sects of cult practices, myths,

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[67]Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 23.

iconographic conventions, and philosophical propositions."[68] When Rome began annexing foreign lands, they not only absorbed the local populations but also, to some extent, their local traditions and deities.

The Greek god Dionysus, also known as Bacchus, took center stage in Rome in 186 BCE. At that time, the senate issued a decree forbidding certain religious cultic practices associated with Bacchus. Those who disobeyed the senatorial decree were liable to capital punishment. But who was Bacchus and how is this decree important to our understanding of Rome's relationship to this foreign cult?

Dionysus is often associated with wine and with theater, which were often brought together in ancient Athenian festivals. Athens had two major festivals commemorating the god: the Dionysia and the Lenaea.[69] At the Dionysia, Pausanias reports that the ancient statue of Dionysus was carried from Eleutherae, northern Attica, and enshrined at the Academy in Athens (*Descr*. 1.29.2). On the eve of the festival of his epiphany, the image of Dionysus would be ceremoniously processed to the god's temple in Athens.[70] At the Lenaea, Athenians would attend theatrical plays and dithyrambic events in honor of the god's birthday.[71] Included in these

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[68] James B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 182.

[69] Hugh Bowden, *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 106.

[70] Walter F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, trans. Robert B. Palmer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), 83. Also Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 106.

[71] Rosemarie Taylor-Perry, *The God Who Comes: Dionysian Mysteries Revisited* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2003), 55.

Athenian festivals were rites of initiating young women into society, which celebrated a woman's intrinsic and mysterious link to the forces of life and death.[72]

By the fifth century BCE, there were already connections between Dionysus and mystery cults. A mystery cult denotes that admission and participation in the cult depends on a personal ritual performed on the initiand. In most cases, secrecy and nocturnal ceremonies gave precedence to the cult's *mystery*.[73] Euripides's *Bacchae*, composed towards the end of the fifth century BCE, tells the myth of Dionysus. In a telling of this myth, Euripides reveals that the cultic practice contains elements of secrecy.[74] In a conversation between Penthius, king of Thebes, and Dionysus we learn that certain elements in the rites (τελεταί), as well as the efficacy of initiation, are to be revealed only to the initiated. Euripides writes,

> Pentheus: What is the source of these rites (τελετὰς) you bring to Greece?
> Dionysus: Dionysus himself initiated me, Zeus's son. …
> Pentheus: Did he compel you by night, or by your sight?
> Dionysus: Seeing me just as I saw him, he gave me rites (ὄργια).
> Pentheus: These rites (ὄργι') – what is their nature?
> Dionysus: They may not be told to the uninitiated (ἀβακχεύτοισιν).
> Pentheus: But those who perform them – what kind of benefit do they get?
> Dionysus: You are not allowed to hear – though they are well worth knowing.
> Pentheus: This is a clever counterfeit, so that I desire to hear.
> Dionysus: The rites (ὄργι') of the god are hostile to whomsoever practices impiety (*Bacch*. 465-466, 469-476 [Kovacs, LCL]).[75]

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[72] Ibid. On the relationship between the theater and the Dionysian rites of initiation see, Richard Seaford, "Dionysiac Drama and the Dionysiac Mysteries," *ClQ* 31 (1981): 252-275. On the Dionysian Athenian festivals see, Carl Kerényi, *Dionysos: Archetypal Image of Indestructible Life*, vol.2 of *Archetypal Images in Greek Religion*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Routledge: London, 1976), 290-315.

[73] Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 1-11, esp. 7-8.

[74] I am indebted to Bowden for his insights. See Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 108-109.

[75] Slightly modified translation.

The rites of the cult of Dionysus includes elements of secrecy. The rites themselves are said to come from the god himself. They take place in the night, when you come face to face with the person who is leading the ceremony of initiation. Since the rite is performed in secret, the initiand is set apart from the rest of society. Furthermore, the rite and the efficacy of the initiation are not to be told to those who are outside of the group. Therefore, the initiated would be punished by the god if they should ever reveal the mysteries of the cult to an outsider.

Pentheus was drawn to the cult of Bacchus because he desired to hear the mystery. This draw, in part, led many of the inhabitants of Rome and many across the regions of Italy to join this cult. What erupted in 186 BCE was a consequence of what the Roman senate considered a possible subversive group. Livy's account of the cult of Bacchus, written during the end of the first century BCE, gives some insight to the issue surrounding this controversy.

Demoralized by the longevity of the Second Punic War, Livy reports that Romans became dejected and began joining foreign cults (*Ad urbe condita*, 25.1.6). Livy writes that this cult led people to perform many acts which were contrary to both Roman piety and civility. In his first account of the cult of Bacchus, the *Bacchanalia*, he says that a nameless itinerant Greek, a humble man, initiated several men and women into the Bacchanalia in Etruria. What was only a few initiates soon became a large number who were attracted to the festivals of wine and impropriety. Livy suggests that they met nocturnally, and their meetings were occasions for debauchery and offenses of all kinds, as they danced and frolicked to a cacophony of cymbals, drums, and screams of human victims offered up (*Ad urbe condita*, 39.8.1-8).

Livy's second account recalls a Roman consul discovering a Bacchanalia. A prostitute named Hispala, the mistress of this Roman consul, describes how the cult developed. Hispala

suggests that the cult was first restricted to women. The rites of initiation only occurred three times a year during the day, and a married woman would officiate as priestess.[76] Hispala goes on to explain that the rites changed under the direction of a woman from Campania named Paculla Annia. Paculla Annia began to initiate men and performed the rites nocturnally and did this five nights a month.

Under Paculla Annia, the Bacchanalia became a nocturnal cult highlighted by sexual promiscuity of all kinds which occurred in excess, as well as all forms of debauchery. Livy writes,

> There were more lustful practices among men with one another than among women. If any of them were disinclined to endure abuse or reluctant to commit crime, they were sacrificed as victims. To consider nothing wrong, she continued, was the highest form of religious devotion among them. Men, as if insane, with fanatical tossings of their bodies, would utter prophecies. Matrons in the dress of Bacchantes, with dishevelled hair and carrying blazing torches, would run down to the Tiber, and plunging their torches in the water (because they contained live sulphur mixed with calcium) would bring them out still burning. Men were alleged to have been carried off by the gods who had been bound to a machine and borne away out of sight to hidden caves: they were those who had refused either to conspire or to join in the crimes or to suffer abuse. Their number, she said, was very great, almost constituting a second state; among them were certain men and women of high rank. Within the last two years it had been ordained that no one beyond the age of twenty years should be initiated: boys of such age were sought for as admitted both vice and corruption (*Ad urbe condita* 39.13.11-12 [Sage, LCL].

If we take Livy at his word, Rome was oblivious to the cult until 186 BCE. But if the Bacchanalia were active in Rome since, at least, the Second Punic War (218-201 BCE) their nocturnal gatherings should have made enough noise that Romans would have become aware of

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[76] Erich Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 34-78. Also, Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 126.

their existence sometime before 186 BCE.[77] As Hugh Bowden suggests, Livy's accounts read

like a piece of drama, as if Livy borrowed it from a comic play.[78] But what truth can be drawn

from Livy's accounts can be seen against the backdrop of the senatorial decree against the

Bacchanalia, the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus*.

The *Senatus Consultm de Bacchanalibus* survives in a bronze copy, currently housed in

Bruttium in southern Italy, and is accurately summarized by Livy (CIL 1.2.581 = ILS 18.511). The

decree demanded that all Bacchic shrines, except where an ancient altar or image had been

consecrated, must be destroyed. Furthermore, no new Bacchic shrine may be installed. Those for

whom the worship of Bacchus was traditional or necessary had to bring their plea to the urban

praetor who would then consult the senate (at least 100 senators had to be present). If the senate

agreed, the supplicant would offer a sacrifice with no more than five people present. A common

fund for the cult was denied and no official priest could preside at the ceremonies (Livy, *Ad urbe

condita* 39.9). The decree led to special trials as well as several thousand charges and sentences.[79]

Ultimately, the Bacchanalia survived only sporadically, for example at Pompeii, but was

eradicated in Rome.[80]

We learn that the repression of the Bacchanalia was merciless. This was the first instance

of Roman religious intolerance, but it is significant to understand why Rome suppressed this cult.

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[77] Robert Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 305.

[78] Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 127. Cf., P.G. Walsh, "Making a Drama out of a Crisis: Livy on the Bacchanalia," *GR* 43 (1996): 188-203.

[79] Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, 305.

[80] Ibid., 306.

It was not an attack on religion since established cultic centers of Dionysus were protected.[81] Only the newly created Bacchic shrines and cultic associations were targeted, likely because of their great numbers and nighttime ceremonies. Livy reports that there were over seven-thousand Bacchants in Rome, their ceremonies were at night, and their rites were secret (*Ad urbe candita* 39.17.6).

The Roman political authority did not have direct control over the cult or its practices. This was Rome's response to sources of authority not associated with the ruling elite. Roman rule largely consisted of collecting taxes, maintaining peace and social stability, and resolving disputes. Roman officials were not in the business of intervening in matters of religion unless public peace and order were at stake. As James Rives observes, "Claims to religious authority made on a basis other than socio-economic status were thus potentially subversive of the entire social and political system … and could elicit a sharp response from Roman authorities."[82] Indeed, because of its standalone nature, its mysterious nocturnal ecstatic meetings, and its popularity, the Roman authority considered the Bacchanalia and its secret rites a disguise for their plotting against Rome.

Though extant evidence is not clear as to whether there was a legitimate threat against Rome at that time or not, the aroma of conspiracy was enough to draw the attention of the authorities. Ultimately, any organization or meeting outside the direct control of the authority

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[81] Robert Turcan, *The Gods of Ancient Rome: Religion in Everyday Life from Archaic to Imperial Times*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 119.

[82] Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 187.

was considered, at least potentially, politically subversive. Consequently, the Bacchanalia were suppressed to near extinction.

<div align="center">Cult of Isis</div>

The goddess Isis, of Egyptian provenance, was the focus of one of the more popular cults during the Hellenistic period (323-31 BCE). Her worship was multi-faceted, and she was praised as the goddess, "mistress of life," protectress of women and marriage, protectress of maternity and the new-born, she who guarantees the grain harvest and abundance of the harvest, and protectress of travelers by both land and sea.[83] Because of the plurality of Isis's power, she was easily assimilated to the many different aspects of Greco-Egyptian and, towards the end of the second century BCE, Greco-Roman religiosity.[84]

By the Hellenistic period, the worship of Isis and, to a large extent, her male counterpart Osiris was widely popular both among the Greeks, and later, among the Romans. This is attested by the four hymns of Isidorus to the goddess Isis, which are dated to the very early first century BCE.[85] These hymns were found at the south gate of an ancient temple near the modern Egyptian village of Medinet Madi. The hymns are particularly important to understanding the development and characterization of the cult of Isis in Greco-Egyptian and in Greco-Roman culture. In the hymns of Isidorus, Isis's plasticity is quickly recognized by her three main titles:

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[83] Warrior, *Roman Religion*, 107.

[84] On the significance of Isianic aretalogies and syncretism in Greco-Egyptian religions see, François Dunand, "Le syncrétisme isiaque à la fin de l'époque hellénistique in *Les syncrétismes dans les religions grecque et romaine: Colloque de Strasbourg (9-11 join 1971)*, eds. Françoise Dunand and Pierre Levêque (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1973), 79-93.

[85] On dating the hymns of Isidorus see, Vera Frederika Vanderlip, *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis*, ASP 12 (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert LTD, 1972), 9-13.

Hermouthis, Demeter, and *Good Fortune* (Τύχη Ἀγαθή). Importantly, Isidorus suggests that Isis

is also known throughout the world by many other names. The inscription reads,

> All mortals who live on the boundless earth,
> Thracians, Greeks and Barbarians,
> Express Your fair Name, a Name greatly honoured among all, (but)
> Each (speaks) in his own language, in his own land.
> The Syrians call You: Astarte, Artemis, Nanaia,
> The Lycian tribes call You: Leto, the Lady,
> The Thracians also name You as Mother of the gods,
> And the Greeks (call you) Hera of the Great Throne, Aphrodite,
> Hestia the goodly, Rheia and Demeter.
> But the Egyptians call you 'Thiouis' [Θιοῦιν] (because they know) that You, being One,
> are all
> Other goddesses invoked by the races of men (Isidorus, *Hymns to Isis* 1.14-24
> [Vanderlip]).

Isis is equated to many female deities of the ancient world. This syncretism would lead to the

popularity and spread of the Isianic cult across vast areas of the Greek world.[86] It was primarily

spread "by means of merchants, Greeks who served in the Egyptian military or civilian

capacities, travelers, sailors, and priests."[87]

The earliest surviving and most complete myth of Isis is found in Plutarch's *de Iside et*

Osiride, which is likely derived from earlier Egyptian sources.[88] Plutarch's *Is. Os.* is considered

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[86] Ibid., 75-83. On the anthropology of syncretism see, Charles Steward "Syncretism and its Synonyms: Reflections on Cultural Mixture" *Diacritics* 29 (1999): 40-62; Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw, eds., *Syncretism/Anti-syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis* (London: Routledge, 1994). Also see, Robert Wild, *Water in the Cultic Worship of Isis and Serapis* (Leiden: Brill, 1981).

[87] Sharon Kelly Heyob, *The Cult of Isis Among Women in the Graeco-Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 8-9. Also, Thomas A. Brady, *The Reception of the Egyptian Cults by the Greeks (330-30 B.C)*, University of Missouri Studies, vol. 10 (Columbia: Universit of Missouri, 1935).

[88] James Alvar, *Romanising Oriental Gods: Myth, Salvation and Ethics in the Cults of Cybele, Isis, and Mithras*, ed. and trans. Richard Gordon (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 39. For commentaries on Plutarch's *Is. Os.* see cf., Theodore Hopfner, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris* (Darmstadt: Wissenchaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967): J. Gwyn Griffiths, *Plutarch's de Iside et Osiride* (Cardiff: University of Wales

to be one of his more philosophical works written towards the end of his life (120 CE).[89] The text, though highly philosophical, gives a glimpse into the life of Greco-Romans in the early second century CE. Importantly, it conveys to us that by this time the myth of Isis has reached a greater level of popularity across the Mediterranean, so much so that *Is. Os.* was accepted by Plutarch's contemporaries as both desirable and needful.[90]

The cult of Isis reached Rome during the late Republic, roughly in the late second century BCE. Her first temples were erected in Puteoli, a region of Campania, in 105 BCE and in Pompeii in 80 BCE.[91] Notice that both Puteoli and Pompeii were two important trading centers for Rome. The reception of the Isianic cult in Italy is likely a consequence of trading between Rome and Egypt.[92] Egypt provided Rome with large quantities of grain yearly and so a cult to Isis, who is often associated with the harvest, should not strike one as odd.[93] The cult came to

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Press, 1970); Hans Dieter Betz and E.W. Smith, "De Iside et Osiride (Moralia 351c-384c)," in *Plutarch's Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 36-84.

[89] On the dating of this work see Griffiths, *Plutarch's de Iside et Osiride*, 16. On the Middle-Platonic implications of Plutarch's work and his choosing of an Egyptian myth to convey such philosophy see, Daniel S. Richter, "Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: Text, Cult, and Cultural Appropriation," *TAPS* 131 (2001): 191-216.

[90] Alvar, *Romanising Oriental Gods*, 40.

[91] Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 161. Also Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York: Dover, 1956), 79.

[92] Brady, *The Reception of the Egyptian Cults*, 32. On Roman economy see, Walter Scheidel, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), esp. 133-320.

[93] The first hymn of Isidorus reads, "By Your power the channels of Nile are filled, everyone,/ at the harvest season and its most turbulent water is poured/ on the whole land that produce may be unfailing" (1.11-13 [Vanderlip]). Also Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 161. And, Michel Malise, *Les conditions de pénétration et de diffusion des cultes égyptiens en Italie* (Leiden: Brill, 1972).

Rome and flourished during a time of great political unrest. Opposition to the cult first appeared during the period known as the first *triumvirate*: when political power was equally shared between Julius Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus in 60 BCE.[94] The temples and shrines of Isis were ordered to be destroyed in 59, 58, 53, 50, and 48 BCE.[95] There are two overarching reasons why the cult was understood to be hostile toward Rome. First, as seen with the cult of Bacchus, any cult or organization that may possibly threaten the civic order was understood to be subversive. The cult of Isis was perceived to infiltrate Roman culture, hence Rome removed Isianic shrines and temples from the city of Rome. And second, because the cult was associated with the Ptolemaic rulers, tensions between Rome and Egypt could be manifested by means of the cult.

In the middle of the first century BCE, Cleopatra ruled her native Egypt by virtue of Rome (51-31 BCE). Rome was ultimately threatened by her success since it would possibly jeopardize Rome's position in the world.[96] Rome was an established patriarchal society so for a woman to have control over Roman territory and Roman legions could be seen to threaten the patriarchal society of Rome. At the time of the second *triumvirate*, when Roman authority was shared between Octavian, Marcus Antony, and Marcus Lepidus, there was a declaration among the three to establish a temple of Isis (Cass. Dio. *Roman History*, 47.15.4). Among the *triumvirate*, there was a struggle for power which ultimately led Antony to marry his longtime

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[94] Warrior, *Roman Religion*, 107.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Elizabeth A. McCabe, *An Examination of the Isis Cult with Preliminary Exploration into New Testament Studies* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2008), 35.

mistress, Cleopatra, and escape to Egypt.[97] At the defeat of Antony by Octavian, at the battle of

Actium in 31 BCE, Cassius Dio describes Rome's distaste with Cleopatra; a foreign woman with

power.

> For that we who are Romans and lords of the greatest and best portion of the world
> should be despised and trodden under foot by an Egyptian woman is unworthy of our
> fathers, who overthrew Pyrrhus, Philip, Perseus, and Antiochus, who drove the
> Numantians and the Carthaginians from their homes, who cut down the Cimbri and the
> Ambrones … Should we not be acting most disgracefully if, after surpassing all men
> everywhere in valour, we should then meekly bear the insults of this throng, who, oh
> heavens, are Alexandrians and Egyptians (what worse or what truer name could one
> apply to them?), who worship reptiles and beasts as gods, who embalm their own bodies
> to give them the semblance of immortality, who are most reckless in effrontery but most
> feeble in courage, and who, worst of all, are slaves to a woman and not to a man …
> (*Historia Romana*, 50.24.1-7 [Cary, LCL]).[98]

Because Octavian, as well as the rest of Rome, believed that Cleopatra seduced and manipulated

Antony, there was a public outcry against the Egyptian gods. Three years after the battle of

Actium, Octavian forbade the worship of the Egyptian gods in Rome. But because of its

popularity the Isianic cult was not resisted outside of Rome.[99]

It could be argued that the cult of Isis was disruptive to society and its foreignness could

come under some suspicion as a subversive group.[100] Furthermore, because of Antony's betrayal,

devotion to an Egyptian deity could be regarded as a conflict of interest. Simply put, the goddess

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[97] It is interesting to note that ancient authors suggest Marcus Antony disguised himself as a
priest of Isis to escape from Rome (E.g., Appian, *Bella Civilia* 4.4.7). Cf. John M. Carter,
The Battle of Actium: The Rise & Triumph of Augustus Caesar (London: Hamilton, 1970).

[98] I am grateful for the insights of Elizabeth A. McCabe. See McCabe, *An Examination*, 35-36.

[99] Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 163.

[100] Howard Clark Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method*
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 129.

Isis is understood to be doing battle with the ancient gods of Rome.[101] Octavian's religious attitude was expressed in his prohibition of foreign cults and rites, as well as his support for the traditional Roman cults.[102] It was understood that those who joined the Isianic cult took on an Egyptian identity. Because Egypt was associated with Antony's betrayal, Egyptian identity was perceived to be a threat to Rome's stability.

Thus far, both the cults of Bacchus and Isis were understood as subversive. The cult of Bacchus was outside of the direct control of the elite. Because of its popularity and nighttime activities, the senate considered it a subversive group and mercilessly extinguished the Bacchanalia in Rome and throughout the regions of Italy. In similar fashion, the cult of Isis was understood as subversive insofar as Egypt was an enemy of Rome. Hence to be an adherent of Isis meant to be an enemy of the ancient gods of Rome. Yet, as I have been shown, Plutarch in the first century CE gives a detailed account of the myth of Isis showing the popularity of the cult outside of Rome. Moreover, Apuleius in the second century CE writes about Isis and her mysteries in his *Metamorphoses* (11.23-25), showing how Romans had a great interest in her mysteries. We may infer that while tensions were high between Rome and Egypt, the Isianic cult was understood to be subversive and an attack on Roman society. It was not until Gaius Caligula, who deified himself, decriminalized the Isianic cult in Rome allowing it to flourish there once again.[103]

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[101] Cyril Bailey, *Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1972), 186. Also, McCabe, *An Examination*, 36.

[102] Horst R. Moehring, "The Persecution of the Jews and the Adherents of the Isis Cult at Rome A.D. 19," *NovT* 3 (1959): 293-304, 294.

[103] R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 224.

The Cult of Yahweh - Judaism

Judaism and its place in the Greco-Roman world are unique. In the ancient world they were a people defined by their own laws, worshipping their own god, and having their own traditions within a predominantly Greco-Roman, non-Jewish, society. The topic of Judaism in the ancient world is important, but the enormity of this subject is well beyond the scope of this chapter.[104] Instead, what follows is a general description of the relationship between Greco-Romans and diasporic Jews during the Hellenistic period into the very early Principate.[105]

Jews who lived outside of Palestine organized themselves into communities where they could live a public life while remaining distinctly Jewish in their practice. The "civic" situation

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[104] For more detailed discussions on Judaism in the Greco-Roman world see these important and helpful studies: Shimon Applebaum, *Jews and Christians in Ancient Cyrene,* SJLA 28 (Leiden: Brill, 1979); John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996); Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1988); John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997); Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1993); Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (London: Allen Lane, 2007); Erich S Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, HCS 30 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle for Equal Rights* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985); D. S Russell, *The Jews from Alexander to Herod* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947); Leonard V Rutgers, *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism: Essays on Jewish Cultural Identity in the Roman World*, CBET 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1998); Leonard V Rutger, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Shemuel Safrai, and Malcom Stern, eds., *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions,* 2 vols. CRINT 1/1-2 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974-1976); E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, SJLA 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1976); Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Atheneum, 1970).

[105] For a detailed study of Hellenism and its effects on Palestinian Jews see Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period*, 2 vols., trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press LTD, 1974).

of the Jews in antiquity was one of the larger looming issues we find in the Hellenistic world,

especially during the rise of the Roman Empire. The main concern of many Jews who existed

outside of Palestine was the issue of civic rights and, often, citizenship. For example, Victor

Tcherikover notes that in Hierapolis in Phrygia, the Jewish community there were organized as a

κατοικία.[106] This term refers to a colony of people who are of foreign birth but enjoyed privileges

of self-administration.[107] The Jews were also categorized as a πολίτευμα, an organization of

foreign born inhabitants of a city where they have a right of residence in that city.[108] To classify

the Jews as κατοικία or πολίτευμα allows for two further considerations. Even though the Greeks

acknowledged the Jews as foreigners in their territories, they recognized the autonomy of Jewish

assemblies within their communities.[109]

The Jewish Roman historian Josephus recounts a letter sent from the Hellenistic Greek

king Antiochus III to his governor Ptolemy. In it Antiochus III decreed that the Jews had the

right to live "according to their ancestral laws" (Josephus, *A.J.* 12.138-141, 151; 16:168 [Marcus,

LCL]).[110] This meant that as a πολίτευμα, the Jews were privileged to receive complete freedom

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[106] Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 298.

[107] Ibid., 25, 298. See also Sandra Gambetti for her discussion of κατοικία and Alexandrian Jews; Sandra Gambetti, *The Alexandrian Riots of 38 C.E. and the Persecution of the Jews: A Historical Reconstruction* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 57-76.

[108] E. Mary Smallwood observes that "Such a corporation was a quasi-autonomous civic unit with administrative and judicial powers over its own members, distinct from and independent of the Greek citizen body and its local government." See Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 139. Victor Tcherikover suggests that the term κατοικία better describes the position of the diaspora Jews. See Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization,* 297-298.

[109] Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 298.

[110] Slightly modified translation.

in all matters of religion. Though they received these privileges, their exclusivity as a distinct religious group made them quite unpopular.[111] Nonetheless, Antiochus III allowed the Jews several privileges which were carried over in some fashion into the Roman period.[112]

Likely the most important privilege of existing as a πολίτευμα was that Jews were not obliged to worship in the traditional cults. As it has been shown, Roman attitude to foreign cults was one of toleration, as long as the cult was not hindering the traditional cults of Rome or causing suspicion of subversion. Judaism was significant in that it recognized no other god before the god of Israel. Tcherikover observes,

> The God of Israel acknowledged no rivals, nor could one pray to Him and simultaneously offer sacrifices to another deity. The cult of the gods was in Jewish eyes the complete negation of Judaism. The existence of the Jewish communities was therefore bound up with the exemption of the Jews by the authorities from participation in the cult of the Greek deities, and this was its negative condition.[113]

Even with Judaism's denial of the worship of the gods, which was tied to the civic well-being of the larger community, Judaism's interest in morality allowed them to exist in thriving communities without hindrance by the Republican/imperial authority (for the most part).[114] It is important to note that there is no official document that precisely lists this privilege, namely that the Jews were exempt from the worship of the Greco-Roman gods. Though it may be the case that such a document did not survive, it is more likely that such a document could not be drafted

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[111] Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 123 n.15, 16, 17.

[112] On Antiochus III and the conquering of Judea see, Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, 64-69.

[113] Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 305.

[114] Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 124.

out of piety. As Tcherikover suggests, "For could anyone – whether Greek king, Roman governor or Greek city – write the words: 'I permit the Jews not to respect the gods?'"[115] Diaspora Jews had to petition each new emperor for their rights to worship. In their petition they were likely to refer to the previous emperor's benevolence in allowing their worship (e.g., Philo, *Legat*. 143-149), in order to show precedence for their request. But even when an emperor approved the rights of Jews to freely worship according to their customs, they would never specify that they could not worship the gods of empire (e.g., P. Lond. 1912). This lack of documentation would be a major point of contention for Jews as they sought to obtain civic rights throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods.[116]

As a πολίτευμα, the Jews were given rights to congregate as an association. A common feature of the Jewish associations in the diaspora was the synagogue, also known as a 'house of prayer.'[117] The Jewish synagogue functioned as a meeting house in which Jews would gather for worship. The assembly had a number of functions granted to it: it allowed for regular assembly on the Sabbath for religious and educational purposes, a right to collect funds for maintaining the grounds, and keeping a collection to be sent to the temple in Jerusalem.[118] It was under Julius Caesar that Jewish synagogues received their most important recognition, when he publicly

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[115] Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 306.

[116] Ibid., 307.

[117] ἡ προσευχή, e.g., Philo, *Legat*. 132, 134, 137, 138, 148, 152, 156, 157, 165, 191, 346,371; *Flacc*. 41, 45, 47, 48, 49, 53; Acts of the Apostles 16:3. See also Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 133.

[118] Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 133.

emphasized Jewish rights.[119] Josephus records one of Caesar's edicts written to Parium. In it he says that the Jews of the Delos may live according to "their national customs and sacred rites" since they are "friends and allies." Furthermore, they would be allowed to "contribute money to common meals and sacred rites" and he points to the fact that "they are not forbidden" of these rights even in Rome (*A.J.* 14.213-214 [Marcus, LCL]).

These concessions are quite important when one considers that many *collegia* (θίασοι), or voluntary associations, and foreign cults were dissolved three times: by the Roman senate in 64 BCE, again in 58 BCE, and during the Roman civil war during the consulship of Octavian.[120] Though collegia were dissolved, Jewish associations were exempt from these laws. Again, Josephus recounts the benefaction of Julius Caesar.

> Similarly do I forbid other religious societies but permit these people alone to assemble and feast in accordance with their native customs and ordinances. And if you have made any statutes against our friends and allies, you will do well to revoke them because of their worthy deeds on our behalf and their goodwill toward us (*A.J.* 14.216 [Marcus, LCL]).[121]

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[119] Philip Harland notes, "the notion that 'each cult in the Empire was either a *religio licita* or a *religio illicita*' is not supported by any ancient source. The benefits granted were part of the exchanges involved in conventions of friendship and patronage, part of the benefactor-beneficiary relationship in which … many other associations of Asia were also particpants." See, Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 223. For arguments suggesting the Jews were a *religio licita* see, Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 135. Also Wendy Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law: State Restrictions on Voluntary Associations, 64 BCE- 200 CE" in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, eds., John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 74-89, 77.

[120] Peter Richardson, "Early Synagogues as Collegia in the Diaspora and Palestine" in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, eds., John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 90-109. Also Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law," 75.

[121] With exactitude, one is unsure why Caesar calls the Jews "friends and allies." John Barclay conjectures, "What benefit Caesar derived from the support of the Roman Jews we cannot tell, but his policy in the East was dependent to an important degree on the co-operation of the Judaean rulers, and its

John Barclay links this passage to Caesar's decree as recorded by Suetonius which dissolved all collegia "except those of ancient foundation" (Cuncta collegia praeter antiquitus constituta distraxit) (*Iul*. 42.3 [Rolfe, LCL]).[122] Thus one can understand that Caesar recognized the Jewish synagogues as an apolitical ancient collegium, permitting them to exist and function in full capacity.[123]

As was Julius Caesar, Augustus was suspicious of foreign cults and collegia and reissued the edict of their dissolution. Augustus sustained the privileges promised to the Jews by his father and even ordered that whenever gifts were distributed to the people of Rome, if it coincided with the Jewish Sabbath, allowed the Jews to receive their share sometime after the Sabbath. Philo says,

> He [Augustus] never put the Jews at a disadvantage in sharing the bounty, but even if the distributions happened to come during the sabbath when no one is permitted to receive or give anything or to transact any part of the business of ordinary life, particularly of a lucrative kind, he ordered the dispensers to reserve for the Jews till the morrow the charity which fell to all (*Legat*. 158 [Colson, LCL]).

In the longer passage of Philo's *Legat*., he shows how Augustus maintained the status quo of the Jews in the empire (*Legat*. 156-158). But these distributions show an extension of Augustus's benefaction to the Jews insofar as a concession is made for Jewish Sabbath worship. [124] Evidence

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appears that the Roman Jews were able to benefit from this alliance on the basis of their common nationality. … Their support proved to be crucial for Caesar's campaigns in the East …" Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 291.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid., 292. Also see, Zvi Yavets, *Julius Caesar and His Public Image* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1983), 85-96.

[124] Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 136.

shows that Jews flourished in Rome during the Principate of Augustus; their population grew and their significance as a social group was widely recognized.[125] There were many accusations made against the Jews during the period of Julius Caesar's dictatorship and Augustus's Principate , but these allegations were never made by the imperator. As previously seen in Josephus's *Antiquities*, Julius Caesar admonishes the authorities in Parium to revoke any laws made against the Jews in Delos (*A.J.* 14.216).

This seemingly friendly attitude towards the Jews from Julius Caesar and Augustus seemed to fade somewhat during the Principate s of Tiberius (14-37 CE), Gaius Caligula (37-41 CE), and Claudius (41-54 CE). I am persuaded by John Barclay's thesis, wherein argues that aspects of Judaism were becoming popular among the inhabitants of Rome.[126] For example, some Romans began to "observe" the Sabbath insofar as they closed their shops.[127] In Horace's *Sermones* (e.g., 1.9.60-78) and in Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (e.g. 1.75-76), they both mock Jewish religious and social customs. Though Horace and Ovid wrote before Tiberius's Principate, their perception of Judaism may indicate that Romans had a general understanding of some Jewish customs. These customs were gaining popularity among the lower classes in Rome, but it was not yet considered a threat to Roman society.[128]

Cassius Dio says that the expulsion of Jews under Tiberius in 19 CE was a consequence of many Romans being converted to certain Jewish customs. Dio writes,

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[125] Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 295.

[126] Ibid. ,298-306.

[127] Ibid., 296.

[128] Ibid., 297.

> As the Jews had flocked to Rome in great numbers and were converting many of the natives to their ways, he banished most of them (*Historia Romana*, 57.18.5a [Cary, LCL]).

Josephus also narrates the story of Fulvia, the wife of a Roman senator, who adopted certain Jewish customs because of four Jews in Rome who eventually stole her donations made to the Jerusalem temple (*A.J.* 18.81-84). Tiberius's actions against the Jews came simultaneously with his actions against the cult of Isis; he therefore viewed both the cult of Isis and Judaism as suspicious. We have seen actions taken against the cults of Bacchus and Isis, but this was the first-time action was taken to limit the influence of Judaism in Rome.

It is important to make a few remarks on Paul and the early Pauline communities. I would like to consider how Roman attitudes on Judaism may have affected Paul and the communities he founded. Though this topic is well beyond the scope of this dissertation, I think it important to consider several points. Paul is on the cusp of forming a new religious identity, which is not completely Jewish and not completely Greco-Roman. Paul understands himself as a Jewish follower of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:13-14; 2:15 Phil 3:4-6). But faith in Jesus Christ means that he is no longer obligated to observe the Mosaic Law (Rom 2:16-29; 3:31; 8:3-4; 13:8-10; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:13, 22-24). It is probably the case that Paul saw his communities under the umbrella of Judaism, which could mean that Roman attitudes towards early Christ groups was indistinguishable from other Jewish groups. If this notion is the case, then it is likely that Roman attitudes toward Jews in middle of the first century CE had major ramifications on the organization of Pauline communities.

Summary

In summary, we notice that the rights of Jews during the Hellenistic and Roman periods were dependent on the benefaction of the ruler. There was no set law regarding the status of Judaism. Their rights to worship their god were dependent on the support of the ruler. Under Julius Caesar and Augustus, Jews were understood to be neither a threat to the civic society nor to the Roman way of life. At one time, they were even considered "allies and friends" of Rome. But like the Roman response to the cults of Bacchus and Isis, when Judaism began to threaten a Roman way of life the empire answered antagonistically. Jewish rights became a point of contention for many years following the Augustan Principate . It led to several uprisings including the Judean War in 66-73 CE, two revolts in Alexandria in 66 CE and in 115-117 CE, as well as another Judaean revolt led by Bar Kochba in 132-135 CE.[129] The Roman Empire allowed the Jewish cult to practice their religion in Rome because of their patronage of the emperor. When Rome perceived a threat to their way of life, on account of acculturation (Romans adopting Jewish customs), they restricted the rights of Jews. In other words, Judaism was tolerated until it was perceived as a civic threat.

Conclusion

The Roman Republic actively sought war and conquest. This drive for power was legitimized by economic and defensive justifications, but underlying these reasons was a political motivation. In the age of the Republic, war was an integral part of society which even made up a large part of a young aristocrat's education. A year without war in Rome was an anomaly. Underlying this warfare ethos was a competition among the elite for military honors. Military honors allowed

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[129] Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 195-196.

one the ability to obtain political office. For a Roman to be qualified for political office, he must have served in numerous military campaigns. Yet this drive for power seemed gradually to cease during the Principate of Augustus. The *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* presents the emperor Augustus as the greatest military leader who had ever come to power. His authority is unrivaled and is not shared with anyone else. Therefore, all military honorifics only applied to emperor and the imperial family. If one sought political office, he became reliant on the benefaction of the emperor rather than militaristic campaigns and military honorifics.

As a consequence of Rome's wars, Rome became a multi-ethnic city welcoming foreign peoples and their religious customs. Some foreign cults were first welcomed until they aroused suspicion of political subversion. With the cult of Bacchus and the Bacchanalia, their night-time rituals, their popularity, as well as their being outside of the direct authority of the elite provoked suspicion of political subversion. This Greek cult was mercilessly targeted by the Republican authorities. Bacchic temples were destroyed, peoples arrested and executed, and sacrifices to Bacchus became a rare and non-publicized event. The cult of Isis was widely popular for almost two centuries in Rome until Antony's betrayal of Octavian. To worship Isis meant, in some way, that one was taking on an Egyptian identity. Considering the Ptolemaic rulers and Antony's betrayal, this identification threatened Roman civic society. Not only could Isis worship undermine Rome's imperium, but it could also undermine the ancient gods of Rome. The cult was suppressed by Octavian/Augustus and Tiberius because it was considered subversive and threatened the civic stability of Rome.

The cult of Yahweh, like Bacchus and Isis, was largely tolerated by Rome. Julius Caesar as well as Augustus considered the Jews to be "friends and allies," an apolitical and morally

respectable people. They were considered a πολίτευμα by the Greeks and Romans; foreign born

inhabitants of a city where they have a right of residence in that city. Under Julius Caesar and

Augustus, the Jews were considered a collegium with an "ancient foundation" allowing them

certain privileges: permission to gather weekly at their prayer houses (synagogues), permission

to collect money, and permission to send money to the Jerusalem temple. It was not until the

reign of Tiberius that Judaism came under suspicion of being politically subversive. As noted,

Jewish practices like Sabbath "observance" became popular among lower working-class

Romans. Hence, Jews were understood to be proselytizing Romans. This meant they were

undermining the Roman religion as well as creating civil unrest. What began as an apolitical

"collegia" eventually became a subversive organization that roused the attention of Tiberius and

the emperors who followed him. What the cults of Bacchus, Isis, and Yahweh have in common

is that they were tolerated by the authority until they stirred the suspicion of the elite.

With regard to Paul, he considered himself a Jewish follower of Christ. If that holds true,

then his communities of Christ followers were likely considered in the same light. But literary

evidence suggests Paul's "prayer-houses" were not recognized with the synagogues of the Jews.

Paul never once considers or calls his communities of Christ believers collegia (θίασοι). Nor

does he establish "synagogues" for gathering for worship. However, he does call his

communities *churches* (ἐκκλησίαι). Therefore, in the following chapter we must consider Paul's

relationship to the larger Greco-Roman voluntary association, and how this shaped his call to

follow Christ as an ἐκκλησία.

CHAPTER FOUR

PAULINE ASSEMBLIES AND GRECO-ROMAN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

Introduction

In chapter one of this study, I have argued that Paul does not openly criticize the Roman Empire

or its emperor. Chapter two attempted to show, by means of a rhetorical critical investigation of

the Pauline letters, that Paul does not incorporate *coded speech* to subvert the empire. Rather,

what informs us most about Paul's writings is his Hellenistic Jewish background. Paul lived in a

culture where he could not avoid daily interactions with the spiritual and political. His

interactions with civic society were multifaceted. When Paul wrote his letters and preached his

gospel, he did so within a framework that depended on the commonalities between his Christian

assemblies and the wider Greco-Roman civic environment.[1]

The Pauline assemblies were a small minority group in the first century. Though these

assemblies are distinctive in first-century, they should not be studied in isolation from analogous

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[1] Though it is common to refer to Paul's communities as "churches" or "church" in the general sense, I, however, have opted to use the word "assembly." The word "church" carries with it many modern connotations which can lead to an anachronistic interpretation of the earliest Pauline communities. See James D. G. Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem, Christianity in the Making* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 6 n.9.

social structures of that time.[2] As Philip Harland observes, Greco-Roman associations, Christian assemblies, and Jewish assemblies have significant parallels since they all developed in similar civic contexts.[3] This chapter will, therefore, explore Paul's relationship to the wider civic community, particularly the relationship between his assemblies and Greco-Roman voluntary associations. First, this chapter will discuss the ancient Greco-Roman voluntary association: its general functions, its primary allegiances, and other socio-religious demands. Then, I will describe Paul's assemblies which are both similar and dissimilar to the voluntary association. As I will demonstrate, Paul's assemblies have several parallels to voluntary associations, but they are quite distinct as well. Though Paul draws on Septuagintal language and from his immediate context to describe his communities, his assemblies were distinct insofar as he calls them to live in a *new reality*; a life worthy of the gospel of Christ. Finally, each of Paul's assemblies had unique relationships to their wider Greco-Roman communities. We will see how Paul's ethic and gospel were translocal. But it was Paul's gospel which was a unifying aspect of his theology, and among his assembles.[4]

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[2] Philip A. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of Early Christians: Associations, Judaeans, and Cultural Minorities* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2014), 25.

[3] Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 211. Harland also gives a history of scholarship regarding sociohistorical interpretations of early Christian and Jewish assemblies. See ibid., 177-212.

[4] We should note that the early community of Christ believers at Rome was not founded by Paul. But this does not hinder Paul from preaching his gospel to them. It is important to consider how the beliefs of Roman believers in Christ may differ from that of communities which Paul founded.

The Ancient Greco-Roman Voluntary Association

The term "voluntary association" is a catch-all term which some scholars use in their discussion of ancient "clubs" or "guilds."[5] These groups had multiple functions in the ancient world but their purposes included socialization, and were more often connected to some cultic activity as well.[6] Associations would honor their patron deity through oblations and rituals in a group setting. In the Hellenized eastern empire, there were a variety of terms which were used to describe these associations, terms which were shared within broader civic or imperial institutional contexts. Common group designations included κοινόν ("association"); σύνοδος ("synod"); θίασος ("society"); συνέδριον ("sanhedrin"); ἔρανος ("festal-gathering"); συνεργασία ("guild"); συμβισταί ("companions"); ἑταῖροι ("associates"); μύσται ("initiates"); συναγωγή ("synagogue"); σπεῖρα ("company").[7] Other associations took on names that were reflective of their resident city, or the god whom the group worshipped.[8]

To give a complete historical overview of the ancient voluntary association is beyond the scope of this study.[9] Since our concerns are with Paul in his sociohistorical context, we will

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[5] Stephen G. Wilson, "Voluntary Associations: An Overview," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 1-15.

[6] John S. Kloppenborg and Richard S. Ascough eds., *Greco Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary. Vol I. Attica, Central Greece, Macedonia, Thrace*, BZNW 181 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 5.

[7] Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 27. Also Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 5.

[8] Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 27. The role, function, and history of the Greco-Roman association will be discussed in the following sections on Pauline assemblies.

[9] Cf. Nicholas R. E. Fisher, "Greek Associations, Symposia, and Clubs" in *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome*, eds. Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger (New York: Charles

make remarks on the history, societal roles, and societal function of voluntary associations in Paul's immediate setting, particularly in the late Republic, the triumvirates, to early Principate (53 BCE – 68 CE).

<p style="text-align:center">Greco-Roman Associations from the Late Republic to Early Principate</p>

At the beginning of the Hellenistic period (late fourth century BCE), associations in the east became widely popular as a consequence of wars, trade, and displaced peoples. There were "significant populations of slaves, former slaves, resident aliens, foreign traders, merchants, and other non-citizens" who joined associations to share their common ethnic and/or religious identities.[10] During the age of the Republic (458 – 30 BCE), Roman associations, just like Hellenistic associations in the east, had organized rather freely; they organized meetings, collected funds, and honored their patronal deities without direct interference by the state.[11] As the Republic grew so did membership in these associations. In this section, I will offer a brief summary of the Greco-Roman voluntary association from the late Republic to the early Principate.

When civil war broke out in Rome, it was revealed that revolutionaries used the associations as fronts for their agenda of political subversion. Therefore, in 64 BCE, a *senatus consultum* decreed that all *collegia*, the Latin equivalent of "associations," which were suspected

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Scribner's Sons, 1988), 2:1167-1197. Also, Otto M. Van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations in the Roman East* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1997), 5-11.

[10] Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 2.

[11] See Wendy Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law: State Restrictions on Voluntary Associations 64 BCE – 200 CE," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, eds. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 74-89.

of sedition were dissolved. The ban seems to have only affected certain associations and should not be understood as a general prohibition of all *collegia*.[12] In 58 BCE Clodius, after becoming the tribune of the people, lifted the ban (*Lex Clodia de collegiis*) on the associations.[13] Clodius's use of the *collegia*, for his plans of political upheaval, led the senate to renew its strict regulations on associations.[14] In 55 BCE, after the Catiline affair, the *Lex Licinia de sodaliciis* was directed against political associations for their unfair practices of supporting a candidate for a magistracy during the electoral period (cf. Cicero, *Quint. fratr.* 2.3.2; 2.3.4-5).[15]

At the beginning of Julius Caesar's dictatorship in 49 BCE, a decree was issued that permitted only the most ancient *collegia* to exist. Though the precise wording of this decree is no longer extant, we surmise from existing evidence that Julius Caesar dissolved all associations except for the most ancient ones (Suetonius, *Jul.* 42.3; Josephus, *A.J.* 14.10.8).[16] It must be noted that is it not clear how Julius Caesar's decree defined an ancient association. Nonetheless, this law fell out of use during the turmoil of the Republican civil war (49 - 45 BCE), but was later

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[12] Luuk De Ligt, "Governmental Attitudes Towards Markets and Collegia," in *Mercati permanenti e mercati periodici nel mondo romano*, Atti degli incontri capresi di storia dell'economia antica (Capri 13-15 ottobre 1997), ed. E. Lo Cascio (Bari: Edipuglia, 2000), 237-252, 243.

[13] W. Jeffery Tatum, "Cicero's Opposition to the Lex Clodia de Collegiis," *CQ* 40 (1990): 187-194.

[14] Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law," 76.

[15] Adolf Berger, ed., *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law*, vol. 43.2 of *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, ed. Adolf Berger (Philadelphia: Independence Square, 1953), 555-556. Also, Ilias N, Arnaoutoglou, "Roman Law and Collegia in Asia Minor," *RIDA* 49 (2002): 27-44.

[16] Arnaoutoglou, "Roman Law and Collegia in Asia Minor," 31. Also: Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law," 76; Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Greco-Roman Associations*, 219.

reinstated by the emperor Augustus with new provisions.[17] The *Lex Iulia de collegiis* is attested

to in a funerary inscription attributed to the *Collegium symphoniacorum* in Rome. The

inscription has a *terminus post quem* of 27 BCE. It says that their association received approval

from Augustus and that they accepted responsibility for providing public service:

> Dedicated to the *manes* gods. The guild of musicians who are at hand for the sacred
> public [rites?], for whom the senate permitted to come together, to be assembled [and] to
> be convoked by the Julian law for the sake of the [public] games by the authority of
> Augustus (*CIL* VI 2193 = *ILS* 4966) (Translation mine).[18]

That under Augustus, there were three requisites for an association to exist: association must be

of considerable age; to exist, it must have direct approval by the emperor by means of the senate;

it must meet its obligations for public service (see Suetonius, *Aug*. 32.2-3).[19] These requisites

ensured the loyalty of associations to the empire.

Likely during the second-half of Augustus's principate, a *senatus consultum* (*de collegiis*

tenuiorum) was issued which allowed the people of lesser means (*tenuiores*) to convene together

once a month and to contribute to a common fund.[20] An inscription from the city of Lanuvium,

dated to 136 CE, attests to the *senatus consultum de collegiis tenuiorum* of Augustus:

> Chapter from a senatorial decree of the Roman people: It is allowed to persons of lesser
> means to meet and assemble a *collegium*. People wishing to contribute on a monthly
> basis an amount of money for sacral purposes, they can meet for this purpose as a

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[17] Ilias N. Arnaoutoglou, "*"Collegia" in the Province of Egypt in the First Century AD,*" *AncSoc*
35 (2005): 197-216, 199.

[18] *Dis manibus. Collegio symphoniacorum qui sacris publicis praestu sunt, quibus senatus c(oire)*
c(ogi) c(onvocari) permisit e lege Iulia ex auctoritate Aug(usti) ludorum causa (CIL VI 2193 = ILS 4966).

[19] Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law," 78.

[20] I am indebted to the work of Ilias N. Arnaoutoglou whose history of the *senatus consultum de*
collogiis I follow. See Arnaoutoglou, "Collegia in the Province of Egypt," 199-201.

collegium, and not under the guise of an existing *collegium*, unless they gather once a month in order to contribute to a fund, at the expenses of which they are going to bury the deceased (*CIL* XIV 2112 = *ILS* 7212).[21]

The inscription suggests that Julius Caesar's prohibition of associations had been relaxed under Augustus. Augustus allowed for the formation of *collegia tenuiorum*, provided they assembled only once a month, limited the associations to funerary activities, and allowed for a common fund for funerals.[22] That Augustus limits the associations to funerary activities suggests that prior to the *Lex Iulia*, associations were social in nature meeting frequently rather than monthly.[23] The reason why the provision exists for the common fund is to emphasize that even this sacred rite of burial does not warrant a valid excuse for meeting more than once a month.[24] As Arnaoutoglou notes, this *senatus consultum* "may have effectively opened the floodgates for the formation of *collegia*" since the vast majority of associations from the late Hellenistic period to the early Roman Republic had sacred obligations or funerary rites related to their association.[25]

Despite the bans on *collegia* in Rome during the dictatorship of Caesar and principate of Augustus, associations in Asia Minor continued to exist. Arnaoutoglou observes that inscriptions

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[21] *Kaput ex s(enatus) c(onsultum) p(opuli) R(omani): qui[bus res tenuior est, co]nvenire collegiumq(ue) habere liceat. Qui stipem menstruam conferre volen[t ad facienda sac]ra, in it collegium coeant, neq(ue) sub specie eius collegi nisi semel in mense c[oeant stipem co]nferendi causa, unde defuncti sepeliantur …* (*CIL* XIV 2112 = *ILS* 7212). Latin text as restored by Luuk De Light, "Governmental Attitudes Towards Markets and Collegia," 246-247. Translation is by Arnaoutoglou, "Collegia in the Province of Egypt," 200.

[22] Arnaoutoglou, "Collegia in the Province of Egypt," 200.

[23] Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 7.

[24] De Ligt, "Governmental Attitudes Towards Markets and Collegia*, 247.

[25] Arnaoutoglou, "Collegia in the Province of Egypt," 201. Also, Van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations*, 10, 31-69.

from Attica and the Peloponnese, dated to the period of Julius Caesar, indicate that Roman laws had little to no effect in the Greek east.[26]

The emperor Tiberius sought to extinguish the presence of any foreign association in Rome. As I argued in chapter three of this dissertation, this persecution was likely due to the acculturation of the native Romans.[27] Romans began observing foreign practices which may have threatened the integrity of a Roman *ethos*. Suetonius writes:

> He abolished foreign cults, especially the Egyptian and the Jewish rites, compelling all who were addicted to such superstitions to burn their religious vestments and all their paraphernalia (*Tib*. 36 [Rolfe, LCL]).

Like his predecessors, Tiberius issued no law against associations in the provinces. There are claims that Tiberius sought strict control of the associations in Egypt, but primary evidence suggests that no such concern was ever voiced by the emperor.[28] Yet, as Arnaoutoglou shows, Flaccus's ban and dissolution of associations was in response to rising tensions in Alexandria.[29] Philo of Alexandria recounts:

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[26] See *IG II²* 1339 (Attica; 57/56 BCE), which is dated to the year after the *Lex Clodia de collegiis.* Also: *SEG* 37:103 (Atttica; 52/51 BCE); *AJA* 64 (1960) 269 = *SEG* 54:235 (Athens; ca. 50 BCE); *IG* V/2 266 (Mantineia; 46-44 BCE); *SEG* 43:59 (Rhamnous; 41/40 BCE); *IG II²* 1343 (Athens; 37/36 BCE); and *IG* V/1 210-212 (Sparta; 30-20 BCE); Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Greco Roman Associations*, 219. Arnaoutoglou, "Roman Law and Collegia in Asia Minor,"33. Cf. Richard S. Ascough, Philip A. Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg, eds., *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012). Contra Wendy Cotter who suggests that there is a lack of documentation on *collegia* in the western and eastern provinces. Cf. Cotter, *"*The Collegia and Roman Law," 74-89.

[27] Cf. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 49.

[28] Wendy Cotter, for example, suggests that Tiberius had a general distrust of associations and this was relayed through his appointment of Flaccus as governor. See Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law," 79-80.

[29] Arnaoutoglou, "Collegia in the Province of Egypt."

> The sodalities and clubs, which were constantly holding feasts under pretext of sacrifice behaved in matters generally like drunkards, he dissolved and dealt sternly and vigorously all who resisted his command (*Flacc*. 4 [Colson, LCL]).[30]

Within the historical context, Flaccus is not responding to the emperor's *distrust* of associations, but is responding to increased pressures in Alexandria. Neither Philo nor epigraphical evidence maintains that there was ever a general ban on the formation of associations in Egypt.[31]

Regarding the legal status of associations in Rome, extant evidence for associations after Augustus's principate are ambiguous. In 41 CE, Cassius Dio reports in his *Historia Romana*, that Claudius disbanded the *collegia* of Rome: "He also disbanded the clubs (τε ἑταιρείας), which had been reintroduced by Gaius (*Hist*. 60.6-7 [Cary, LCL])." Anthony A. Barrett understands this passage as referring to Gaius Caligula's lax position on associations in Rome.[32] It is more likely, however, that Claudius's disbandment of the *collegia* was a temporary measure that was lifted when such civil disturbances subsided. As E. Mary Smallwood observes, Cassius Dio groups the dissolution of *collegia* with Claudius's temporary closure of Jewish assemblies, and with restrictions on taverns in Rome. Smallwood notes, "All three rulings can be seen as a police measure issued in answer to recent disorders."[33] That Claudius affirms the religious rights of Jews, while simultaneously forbidding their activity in Rome is no contradiction (see, CPJ 153).[34]

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[30] Slightly modified.

[31] Arnaoutoglou, "Collegia in the Province of Egypt," 212.

[32] Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula: The Corruption of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 230. Also Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law," 80.

[33] E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 215. Also, De Ligt, "Governmental Attitudes Towards Markets and Collegia," 248.

[34] See my note on the *The Letter of Claudius to the Alexandrians* in chapter two n.120.

In response to a local disturbance, however, he restricted the rights of one community without hindering the rights of other communities throughout the empire.[35]

Nero, much like Claudius, responded negatively to *collegia* insofar as they were a perceived threat to civil order. In 59 CE, Tacitus recounts a scuffle at a theater in Pompeii between the residents of Nuceria and Pompeii during gladiatorial games. The fighting left many injured and dead. Tacitus recounts:

> … the Pompeians as a community were debarred from holding any similar assembly for ten years, and the associations which they had formed *illegally* were dissolved (*Ann.* 14.17 [Jackson, LCL]).[36]

Much like the previous example of Flaccus's response to associations in Egypt and Claudius's response to associations in Rome, we have here a temporary police measure imposed by Nero. We may surmise from our evidence that whenever there was civil unrest in Rome or its provinces, the emperor and senate moved to remove associations which were considered illicit. Yet, as it has been shown, the policies enacted in Rome against associations were limited to Rome. And those policies enacted in provinces pertained only to the localized area of the disturbance, and for a temporary amount of time. For the greater part of the empire, especially in the Hellenized east, associations continued to flourish and grow in number.

The Ancient Voluntary Association and its Societal Roles

The Greco-Roman voluntary association refers to ancient groups that people opted to join.[37] These private groups were often small. Membership ranged from about ten people to

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[35] Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule*, 215.

[36] Emphasis mine.

[37] Wilson, "Voluntary Associations: An Overview," 2.

around fifty, but some groups did have membership in the hundreds.[38] These groups would meet regularly to socialize, and to honor their earthly and divine benefactors.

Philip Harland proposes that these associations had external and internal activities which reflected their civic and religious relationships.[39] Externally, associations had relationships with wealthier members of their communities who became benefactors and, sometimes, leaders of the association. In the ancient world, social structure was maintained by the exchanging of benefits for honors.[40] Out of goodwill, those wealthier members of society would make donations to build temples, host festivals, support local associations, or become leaders of associations. Those who received these donations would then honor their benefactors in various ways including making them special guests at meetings, proclaiming honors during a meeting, or erecting a statue or monument for the benefactor(s).[41] These social relations varied in their level of involvement from one group to another.[42]

Overall, all associations were in some sense religious, and each had a particular deity associated with the group. Internal relations included several activities such as worshiping the

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[38] Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 26.

[39] Ibid., 26-28.

[40] Ibid., 148.

[41] Ibid. Cf. see, J.E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[42] Harland treats the external relations of voluntary associations more completely in, Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 115-176.

gods through cultic rituals of sacrifices and commensality.[43] These communal meals were intrinsic to the life of these associations, because it tied in directly to the socioreligious element of their lives.[44] But these groups also had common funds for funerary activities, honorific decrees, and commensality.[45]

In the following subsection, I will present the primary functions and societal roles of these associations within their civic contexts. Because associations varied from location to location, there will be some differences regarding how associations related to their environments. But, their commonalities outweigh their dissimilarities.

Identifying Voluntary Associations and their Heterogeneity

The main evidence for associations in the ancient Mediterranean comes from several types of epigraphical and papyrological documents, specifically four types which are most plentiful:

1. Honors or honorific decrees commending distinguished members of association or its benefactors, and inscribed on steles. These were frequently set up in temples or sometimes affixed to the benefactor's home;

2. Membership lists;

3. Funerary monuments, and *koinon* tomb inscriptions;

4. Dedications to the deities or patrons of associations.[46]

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[43] For a treatment of commensality in the ancient associations see, Richard S. Ascough, "Forms of Commensality in Greco-Roman Associations," *CW* 102 (2008): 33-45.

[44] Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 27.

[45] See, Van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations*, *passim*.

[46] Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 3. For less common, but equally important, epigraphical and papyrological evidence see, ibid.

These documents range in dates, from the fifth century BCE to the second or third centuries CE. Because our specific concern is Pauline assemblies, I will limit the discussion to evidence from Rome and Asia Minor. These documents illustrate several important features of voluntary associations.

From the extant evidence, we are able to identify five common types of associations in the cities of Roman Asia. These guilds were drawn from "household connections, ethnic or geographic connections, neighborhood connections, occupational connections, and cult or temple connections."[47] These groupings allow us to analyze the demographics of the association. Contrary to Hans-Josef Klauck, associations were not created to compensate for "the destruction of the structure of the *polis*."[48] As Kloppenborg and Ascough observe, "associations likely served as vehicles by which various populations in the *polis* replicated and internalized the hierarchical structures of the ancient city and mimicked its honorific practices."[49] Furthermore, Pantelis Nigdelis observes that when people joined associations, they aimed at being "reintegrated into the life of the city as active citizens" by their shared identities as members of an association.[50] Members of associations aimed at internalizing the *polis* in their own meetings, and used their membership as a means of connecting themselves to the larger civic institution.

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[47] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 29.

[48] Hans-Joseph Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*, trans. Brian McNeil (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 43.

[49] Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 8. Similarly, Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 55-88, 103-106,

[50] Pantelis M. Nigdelis, "Voluntary Associations in Roman Thessalonikē: In Search of Identity and Support in a Cosmopolitan Society," in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikē: Studies in*

Familial associations made up a significant number of voluntary associations.[51] Ancient familial networks far surpassed what we would now consider relational. This network also included slaves and other dependents. An excellent example of a familial private association comes from Torre Nova in Italy, concerning the family of Agrippinilla.[52] In 160 CE, a large group of about four-hundred initiates (μύσται) of Dionysus honored their priestess Agrippinilla with a statue (*IGUR* I 160). Harland draws from the study of Achille Vogliano who shows that, "many of the main functionaries come from the families of Agrippinilla and her husband, M. Gavius Squilla Gallicanus, who was consul in 150 CE and proconsul of Asia in 165 CE"[53] The statue lists the names of 292 men and 110 women of free, freed, or servile status which reflect dependents of that household.[54] But once a familial association is established, it is common for membership to include friends of the family, and those with occupational and other indirect relationships to the family.

Those people who shared ethnicity or lived in the same geographic area also created associations based on their shared identity. The majority of ethnic associations were composed

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Religion and Archaeology, HTS 64, eds., Laura Nasrallah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 13-48, quote on p. 36.

[51] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 30

[52] I am thankful for Philip Harland's observations on this familial association. See this and other examples in ibid., 30-33.

[53] Ibid., 30. Also, Achille Vogliano, "La grande iscrizione bacchica del Metropolitan Museum," *AJA* (1933): 215-231.

[54] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations* 30.

mainly of immigrants, and members could be of varying social and economic status.[55]

Membership in local associations were composed of those who lived in the same area; on the

same street, district, or town.[56] These local associations saw less variation in social status among

its membership, since those who lived in a close vicinity to each other reflected similar social

brackets.[57]

Occupational associations were more homogenous because one's occupation is more

often related to social status.[58] There was a wide range of occupational associations including

clothing or weaving related groups, food related groups, groups of potters, smiths, and artists,

masonry groups, groups of bankers, merchants, and traders, physicians, and entertainment

groups.[59] It should be noted that not all guilds were exclusive in their membership. For example,

membership in occupational associations serve a group of people with similar professions,

though their social status may differ. An inscription in Ephesus, dating to the mid-first century

CE, details an association of fishermen and fish dealers who donated to the building of a fishery

toll office (*IEph* 20 = *NewDocs* V5 = PH 247975).[60] The inscription lists donors in order of the

size of their donations. Donations range from "four columns" or "30 denarii," to "five denarii" or

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[55] Ibid., 34.

[56] Ibid., 36-37.

[57] Ibid., 37.

[58] Ibid., 38-44.

[59] See Harland for related epigraphical evidence in ibid., 39-40.

[60] Cf. Ascough et al., *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 101-104. Also, Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 43.

less. The list represents not only social status, but also the range of wealth among the membership of this association.

Social networks created through affiliation with specific cults or temples offered another avenue by which associations were formed.[61] These associations were not connected to the official body of temple officials, but still used the temple for their group meetings.[62] The membership of these cultic associations varied. For example, the association devoted to the Phrygian deity Sabazios was mainly composed of male membership, yet the association of Sabaziasts at Teos (a city on the coast of Ionia) honored a woman named Eubola.[63] The association of devotees to Demeter *Karpophores* are known at Ephesus from the first and second centuries CE. Membership in this association, as well as others devoted to Demeter, could consist of both male and female leaders and initiates.[64]

Contrary to Wayne Meeks' observations, voluntary associations were not always socially homogenous.[65] Though the associations varied in their internal activities, they were interconnected socially and religiously. Ultimately, voluntary associations provided their members a sense of belonging and identity. [66]

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[61] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 44-52.

[62] Ibid., 44.

[63] Ibid., 45.

[64] Cf. Peter Herrmann, "Demeter Karpophoros in Sardeis," *REA* 100 (1998): 495-508.

[65] Cf. Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul,* 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 79.

[66] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 55.

Functions of the Voluntary Association: Social, Religious, and Funerary

As Kloppenborg and Ascough noted, it is likely that most associations met for the purposes of sociability, often connected to the worship of a deity.[67] But was there any social advantage for a member of an association? Regarding occupational associations Kloppenborg says,

> The benefits sought by professional collegia were for the most part unconnected with their work. These included above all patronage in support of the common meals. And perhaps a wealthy patron might be persuaded to purchase buildings for the group's meetings or a common burial ground. … collegia were more interested in the pursuit of honour than of economic advantage.[68]

Recently, Philip F. Venticinque has observed that associations, most especially those who had rules for moral behavior, sought to create and maintain bonds of trust between their members. In essence, an association not only reinforced familial relationship, but also maintained strong social bonds between the members. These social bonds led to positive economic benefits for the entire group.[69]

Moreover, associations would foster feelings of pride for the *polis* or *patris*.[70] Some scholars, however, argue that associations were excluded from participation in civic life.[71] On the

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[67] Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 5.

[68] John S. Kloppenborg, "Collegia and Thiasoi: Issues in Function, Taxonomy, and membership," in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, eds. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 16-30, quote on p. 19.

[69] Philip F. Venticinque, "Family Affairs: Guild Regulations and Family Relationships in Roman Egypt," *GRBS* 50 (2010): 273-294.

[70] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 101-112.

[71] E.g. C.P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 80-81; M.I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 2nd ed. (London: Hogarth, 1985), 136-138; Guy MacLean

contrary, Van Nijf observes that several Lydian occupational associations referred to themselves

as a tribe (φυλή), which possibly connotes that they had some form of political social status in

the city.[72] Notice that the population of most Hellenistic Roman provinces were mainly

craftsmen and traders.[73] If these groups considered themselves a φυλή in the traditional sense of

the term, then this has major implications on the civic relationship between occupational

associations and local governments. It seems to be the case that participation in the voluntary

association did not mean that members no longer participated in the life of the *polis*. Rather, the

relationship between the *polis* and voluntary associations were non-conflicting.

An early third century CE inscription from Philadelphia may shed some light on this

issue (*IGLAM* 648 = *IGRR* IV 1632). This inscription records a number of significant details

which alludes to the relationship between voluntary associations and the *polis*: that the

benefactor Aurelius Hermippos, who is "leader of the athletes" (ξυστάρχης), was honored by the

polis as a "friend of the homeland" (φιλόπατρις); a mention of "the most revered association of

elders" (τῷ σεμνοτάτῳ συνεδρίῳ τῆς γερουσίας); a mention of seven associations as "tribes"

(φυλαί); a mention of the "sacred tribe of wool-workers" (ἡ ἱερὰ φυλὴ τῶν ἐριουργῶν).[74]

Another inscription, dated from the same period, also refers to "the sacred tribe of leather-

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Rogers, *The Sacred Identity of Ephesos: Foundation Myths of a Roman City* (London: Routledge, 1991), 71-72. See, Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 103.

[72] Van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations*, 20-21.

[73] Friedemann Quaß, *Die Honoratiorenschicht in den Städten des griechischen Ostens: Untersuchungen zur politischen und sozialen Entwicklung in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993), 355-365.

[74] Cf. Ascough, *Greco Roman Associations*, 185-186.

workers" (ἡ ἱερὰ φυλὴ τῶν σκυτέων) (*IGLAM* 656).[75] These terms may connote a network of relationships between the *polis* and the guilds. This evidence suggests that there are possible relationships between local governments and some voluntary associations.

As Ascough notes, these inscriptions are relatively late when considering how ancient associations functioned in the first century CE.[76] Yet, it is not uncommon for voluntary associations to imitate positions of leadership from their civic institutions. They used such titles as, "secretary" (γραμματεύς), "treasurer" (τάμιας), "president" (ἐπιστάτης), and "superintendent" (ἐπιμελητής).[77] Furthermore, the activities of voluntary associations would reflect those of their civic institutions: "passing decrees, granting honors, voting on decisions, electing leaders, and engaging in the conventions of diplomacy."[78] It is important to note that some foreigners in the Greek provinces, both freedmen and slaves, who could not join the civic assembly or Council, would use the voluntary associations as a means to achieve an honorary position within the cities.[79] What we begin to notice is that the life of the *polis* and the communal life of the voluntary association were not mutually exclusive. Moreover, voluntary associations in Asia

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[75] Cf. ibid., 186.

[76] Ibid., 187. Cf. Van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations*, 184.

[77] Cf. Franz Poland, *Geschichte des grichischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1909), 376-387. Also, Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 106. For comparison, see the structure of Attic associations in Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 11.

[78] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 106.

[79] Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 11

Minor became recipients of benefaction and were often incorporated into the networks of the civic elite.[80]

Voluntary associations were not just a social phenomenon, but were also religious. Though we may anachronistically understand *social* and *religious* as two separate categories, they were one and the same aspect in the ancient Greco-Roman world. For example, occupational associations in the north coast of the Black Sea worshipped the god Poseidon (*IBosp* 1134; 173-211 CE), and *The Most-High god* (θεός ὕψιστος) (*IBosp* 1283; 228 CE). Household associations in Phrygia worshipped Dionysus (*TAM* V1539; 100 BCE), and Dionysus *The Leader* (καθηγεμών) (*SEG* 41.1202; 2nd century CE). Occupational guilds also honored the gods by erecting altars or other monuments throughout the Roman world.[81] Epigraphical evidence reveals that religion was an intrinsic part of virtually all voluntary associations.

An aspect tied to voluntary associations and the *religious* was funerary activities. As previously mentioned, during Augustus's principate restrictions were placed on *collegia*. They were to meet only once a month, and could have a common fund only to assist members at funerals. Kloppenborg observes that classifying *collegia* by their principal activities is problematic since their activities could range from primarily cultic to primarily social.[82] Though Augustus limited Roman *collegia* to funerary activities, they were not solely established for

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[80] Cf. see *IGRR* I 787; *ISmyrna* 639; *ISardBR* 22; *IGR* I 800. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 106-107. Also Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 11-12; Frederick W. Danker, ed., *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982), 32–34.

[81] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 63 esp. n.5.

[82] John S. Kloppenborg, "Collegia and Thiasoi," 20-23.

funerals. It was not until the emperor Hadrian (117-138 CE), that funerary *collegia* were recognized within Roman law.[83]

Virtually all associations had funerary activities associated with membership which included burial rituals, and feasts held in memory of the deceased member.[84] The importance for burial fluctuated between certain associations, which usually depended on the economic circumstances of the membership.

Harland compares two associations and how they dealt with funerary activities. [85] A *collegium* of the worshippers of Diana and Antinoüs, from Lanuvium, includes in its bylaws extensive details about funerary procedures in case a member should die (*CIL* XIV 2112 = *ILS* 7212; 136 CE).[86] Some of the funerary procedures include what to do if a non-paying member should die, and what to do if a member should die more than twenty miles away from the town (lines 20-40). Less concern is given to funerary activities, for example, with an association of worshippers of Bacchus in Athens. The rule of the *Iobakchoi* (*IG II² 1368*; 164/165 CE) is inscribed into a column and contains 163 lines of regulations for the community. Of the 163 lines, only the final five lines give instructions for the death of a member:

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[83] Ibid., 21.

[84] Van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations*, 38-55,

[85] I am indebted to the work of Philip Harland for his observations on the funerary activities of voluntary associations in, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 84-86.

[86] Cf. Ascough et. al., *Associations in the Greco-Roman World*, 194-198.

> If an Iobakchos dies, let there be a wreath up to the cost of five denarii and a single jar of wine shall be provided for those who attend the funeral. But no one who is absent from the funeral (itself) shall have any wine.[87]

Compared to the amount of space devoted to rules of conduct at the meeting, it might not come as a surprise that so little space is devoted to funerary activities. But taking into consideration that this group likely consisted of wealthier members (considering its fifty denarii initiation fee, monthly dues, and penalty fees), assistance for burial was not a major concern.[88]

Voluntary associations are, in essence, an ongoing social interaction between the community members and the *polis*. The voluntary association seems to be an extension of the immediate family and allows members to network with each other and with their civic institutions. This allowed the membership as well as the *polis* to benefit economically. Furthermore, associations provided their members a sense of belonging. As previously indicated, this sense of belonging was not in response to a declining civic institution. Rather, associations gave members the ability to contribute to the larger civic structures of the *polis*, while simultaneously participating in the life of their larger world.

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[87] Translation from Kloppenborg and Ascough, *Greco-Roman Associations*, 248.

[88] Two other notes on funerary activities of associations. Some associations would even construct communal cemeteries or tombs for their members. There is extensive evidence of communal burial plots in Rhodes (see, *IkosPH* 155-159), and evidence of a communal tomb for an association of flax-workers in Smyrna (See, *ISmyrna* 218; *IEph* 2213). Moreover, the burial plots of wealthier members, who bequeathed monetary gifts to their associations upon their deaths, were regularly taken care of. It would even be customary to congregate at the person's gravesite for a yearly commemoration of the benefactor's death (See, *IEph* 1677, 2112, 2304; *SEG* 43.812). See Van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations*, 47. Also Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 85. On the Rhodian epitaphs see, Peter M. Fraser, *Rhodian Funerary Monuments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

Summary

This section sought to accomplish two goals: the first was to give a brief overview of the voluntary association during the period of the late Republic to the early Principate; and second, to emphasize how associations were not a monolithic phenomenon across the empire. Associations varied in several ways, including their external and internal activities, as well as their societal functions. Yet, these associations all provided their membership a means of socializing with one another and a means to worship their gods. It also gave them the means to create social networks which often granted social and economic advantages.

Paul and the Pauline assemblies emerged within this environment which was saturated with voluntary associations. This observation has led many to place Paul's communities and letters against the backdrop of Greco-Roman voluntary associations. Is there enough evidence to suggest that Paul's assemblies were in fact voluntary associations? In the next section I will argue that there are analogies between the Pauline assemblies and voluntary associations but, nevertheless, there are significant differences. The following section will take a sociohistorical approach to understanding Paul's assemblies and their relationship to their wider Greco-Roman environment.

Pauline Assemblies

Important contributions to the sociohistorical study of early Christianity have been made by Edwin A. Judge, Gerd Theissen, John G. Gager, Abraham Malherbe, John H. Elliott, Wayne A. Meeks, and Richard Horsley.[89] It was Judge who emphasized that Christianity could not be

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[89] See, Edwin A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups in the First Century* (London: Tyndale Press, 1960); Ibid., "The Social Identity of the First Christians: A Question of Method in Religious History," *JRH* 11 (1980): 201-217; Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*,

understood within a metaphorical *bubble*, but that early Christianity was a social phenomenon which naturally reflected the social institutions of its civic contemporaries.[90] Judge goes on to suggest that associations help provide a contemporaneous analog to Christian assemblies, despite some of their differences.[91] Kloppenborg explains that sociohistorical scholars seek analogical comparisons in order to, "identify similarity within difference in such a way that various aspects of the phenomena under consideration become intelligible."[92] The differences can better inform us in our study of Pauline assemblies in four areas: 1) Paul's ability or inability to find a communal niche within his immediate civic context; 2) benefits of belonging to a Pauline assembly; 3) how these benefits were reflective of Greco-Roman polity; 4) and the ways internal relationships of Pauline assemblies were similar and distinguishable from Greco-Roman voluntary associations.[93]

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trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); Ibid., *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, trans. John H. Schütz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1975); Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter: Its Situation and Strategy*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); Meeks, *The First Urban Churches*; Richard Horsley, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1985). Cf. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 4.

[90] Judge, *The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups*, 14.

[91] Ibid., 44.

[92] John S. Kloppenborg, "Edwin Hatch, Churches and Collegia," in *Origins and Method: Towards a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity. Essays in Honour of John C. Hurd*. JSNTSup 86, ed. Bradley H. McLean (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 212-238, 230.

[93] Four observations based on Kloppenborg's insights. See, Kloppenborg, "Edwin Hatch," 230.

In this section, I shall elaborate on Pauline ecclesiology focusing on two questions: how does Paul understand the term ἐκκλησία, and how should we consider Paul's ecclesial social interactions with those outside the assemblies of Christ believers? While the task at hand seeks to understand Paul's ecclesiology and wider civic interactions, it must be noted, however, that each community Paul wrote to developed in different social situations. One cannot generalize about a universal "Pauline assembly."[94] Though there are significant differences between each community Paul wrote to, we will notice a shared "Pauline ecclesiology," and ethical links.

Paul's Ἐκκλησία and Voluntary Associations

Scholars of the 19th century suggested that the earliest Christian groups mimicked Greco-Roman voluntary associations, especially in their inclusion of those of lesser means (e.g. *collegia tenuiorum*).[95] Wayne Meeks objects to such notions and argues that voluntary associations do not serve as useful models for understanding the earliest Christian communities.[96]

Meeks's contentions rely on differences between the Pauline assemblies and voluntary associations, which, he suggests, outweigh their similarities.[97] First, he argues that Christian

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[94] See, John M.G. Barclay, "Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity," *JSNT* 47 (1992): 49-74.

[95] See, Georg Heinrici, "Die Christengemeinde Kirinths und die religiösen Genossenschaften der Griechen," *ZWT* 19 (1876): 464-526; Ibid., *Der Zweite Brief an die Korinther*, 7 ed., Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1890); Edwin Hatch, *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*, 4th ed. (London: Longmans, Green, 1892), 26-55.

[96] Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 77-81. Similar arguments are made for the dissimilarity of Pauline assemblies and Greco-Roman voluntary associations, see, Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 85-89, 324-325; Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 2-4, 30-53. Cf. Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 65

[97] Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 77-81.

groups were much more inclusive "in terms of social stratification and other social categories than were the voluntary associations." He makes this argument based on the heterogeneity of the Pauline assemblies as opposed to the, supposed, "homogeneity" of voluntary associations. Second, Paul's groups did not use similar terminology in the description of his communities. Terms like "*thiasos, factio, curia, corpus*" are nowhere to be found in Paul's letters. Rather, argues Meeks, Paul's use of ἐκκλησία is more closely related to the Septuagint's use of this term as well as the biblical Hebrew phrase קְהַל יהוה (qāhāl YHWH).[98] Third, voluntary associations were a localized phenomenon as opposed to the translocal links of the Pauline assemblies. Fourth, like their Jewish counterparts, Pauline groups were sectarian as opposed to voluntary associations.[99]

Meeks's study warrants close attention because he categorizes the Pauline assemblies as a uniform entity across the Mediterranean. His observations are, to a great extent, based on social data from ancient Corinth which is contrasted over and against his conception of ancient voluntary associations. Kloppenborg observes, however, that it is incorrect to generalize about the makeup of voluntary associations.[100] As previously shown, associations were not uniform, and they varied in their membership. Membership in *collegia* could be a homogenous group (e.g.

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[98] Wayne Meeks, "Corinthian Christians as Artificial Aliens," in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 129-138.

[99] Cf. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 178-182; Thomas Schmeller, *Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung paulinischer Gemeinden und griechisch-römischer Vereine*, SBS 162 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwork, 1995); Wayne O. McCready, "Ekklēsia and Voluntary Associations" in *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, eds. John S. Kloppenborg and Stephen G. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1996), 59-73.

[100] Kloppenborg, "Edwin Hatch, Churches and Collegia," 234-236.

ethnic association like that of the Alexandrians; *IGLSkythia* II 153 = *IGRR* I 604 = PH 173253), or it could be a more heterogeneous group (e.g. the occupational association of fishermen from Ephesus; *IEph* 20 = *NewDocs* V5 = PH 247975).

Though Paul does not use similar titles and designations associated with voluntary associations, both Pauline assemblies and Jewish assemblies shared organizational characteristics with voluntary associations.[101] As Kloppenborg observes, there "is no a priori reason to assume that there was uniformity among the Pauline Churches, any more than one should assume a uniform organizational structure in associations. On the contrary, titles were highly voluble, local particularities abound, and in many instances, we have no indication of how officers were designated."[102] Notice how Paul, in the Corinthian correspondence, praises those who are in leadership positions. He only mentions Stephanas by name and without using official titles (1 Cor 16:15; εἰς διακονίαν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἔταξαν ἑαυτούς). Furthermore, Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 describes the functions of those in leadership positions without listing their official titles (εἰδέναι τοὺς κοπιῶντας ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ προϊσταμένους ὑμῶν ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ νουθετοῦντας ὑμᾶς). As Kloppenborg suggests, Paul seems to be favorable to those who are in leadership positions among the assemblies and it seems likely that if these leaders had assumed special designations, Paul would have likely used them.[103]

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[101] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 181.

[102] Kloppenborg, "Edwin Hatch, Churches and Collegia," 232. Cf. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 181.

[103] Kloppenborg, "Edwin Hatch, Churches and Collegia," 233.

Paul's use of the term ἐκκλησία and its historical background has long been a topic of interest.[104] Though this topic is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note several important points. Wayne Meeks suggests that Paul's use of the term ἐκκλησία lies somewhere amid Greek polity and the larger Jewish tradition.[105] As Young-Ho Park observes, the term ἐκκλησία predominantly appears in the Deuteronomistic books of the Septuagint.[106] The many instances of ἐκκλησία in the Septuagint denotes the assembly of the whole nation, "or more accurately, the assembly *representing* the whole nation."[107] In contrast, the term συναγωγή was used for congregations not representing the whole nation.[108] In the Deuteronomistic books of the Septuagint, the main function of the ἐκκλησία was never to affirm a new covenant or religious agenda. Rather, its primary function was to reaffirm the covenant enacted from the ἐκκλησία at Sinai. Park observes:

> The ἐκκλησίαι at Mt. Sinai was the archetype of all subsequent ἐκκλησίαι for the Israelites, and Deuteronomy was nothing more or less than a record of an ἐκκλησία that reaffirmed what had been given "on the day of the ἐκκλησία" [Deut 4:10]. The occasions recorded as notable ἐκκλησίαι in the scrolls of the Hebrew scriptures were understood as "pivotal," points at which the national identity and the constitutional order were

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[104] Young-Ho Park reviews the history of this topic and makes an important contribution to the function of the term ἐκκλησία in Paul's letters, as well as those factors which influenced Paul's usage of the term. I am grateful for his work. See Young-Ho Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as a Civic Assembly: Understanding the People of God in their Politico-Social World*, WUNT 2/393 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

[105] Meeks, "Corinthian Christians as Artificial Aliens," 135.

[106] Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as Civic Assembly*, 63-68.

[107] See Park's summary statements on this topic in, ibid., 96-97.

[108] Ibid., 97.

challenged and needed to be reestablished. In this way, the ἐκκλησία in Deuteronomy 31:30 became the first example of all pivotal gatherings thereafter.**109**

Thus, whenever the nation gathered, associated with the Jewish assembly at Jerusalem, they made that connection to that pivotal moment at Sinai.**110** Though Meeks' understanding of influences on Paul are important, it is unlikely that Paul simply took on the Septuagint's understanding or a political understanding of ἐκκλησία. Paul, rather, constructed a new reality unique to his assemblies. This reality is composed of a believer's relationship to God through Christ, which is expressed within the Pauline assemblies. Paul seeks to establish a new reality in which believers encounter a new way of life, primarily founded on the gospel he is preaching. This notion will be discussed later in this chapter.

Meeks also suggests that Paul's translocal activities differentiate his assemblies from the voluntary associations. He says that, "each association, even those that served the internationally popular deities, was a self-contained local phenomenon."**111** Richard Ascough refutes Meeks's dichotomy by evidencing translocal relationships between voluntary association while simultaneously minimizing the evidence of Paul's translocal relationship to his assemblies.**112**

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109 Ibid., 89. Cf. Georg Braulik, "'Conservative Reform:' Deuteronomy from the Perspective of the Sociology of Knowledge," *OTE* 12 (1999): 13-23.

110 The importance of Jerusalem, especially among diaspora Jews, is central to Jewish identity. See, John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE – 117 CE)* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1996), 417-424. On diasporic Jewish identity see, John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000).

111 Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 80.

112 Richard S. Ascough, "Translocal Relationships among Voluntary Associations and Early Christianity," *JECS* 5 (1997): 223-241; Ibid., "Voluntary Associations and the Formation of Pauline

Ascough is correct when he argues against Meeks's claim that Paul is attempting some sort of

organizational structure which he *imposed* on his assemblies.[113] Ascough presents evidence

which he proposes to be translocal links between associations, but as Park suggests, the quoted

evidence shows relationships between associations "mitigated by the civic authorities rather than

direct relationships between remote communities."[114] Indeed, Paul did not impose a universal

hierarchical structure upon the assemblies, but he did try to create a shared custom among his

communities by encouraging certain behaviors, as well as encouraging his communities to elect

representatives. I agree with Park who says that Paul's assemblies' translocal relationship was

"not incidental but central" to the shared identity of the Pauline ἐκκλησίαι.[115] This shared identity

is directly related to Paul's use of the term ἐκκλησία, that is fashioned around a *new reality*

which is constituted by the centrality of the gospel of Christ.

Ἐκκλησία and a *New Reality* in Christ

One-hundred-five of the one-hundred-thirty-three instances of the term ἐκκλησία in the

New Testament occur in the Pauline literature. The term appears a total of forty-four times in the

undisputed letters of Paul.[116] Though the term appears to be conspicuously Pauline, it is probable

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Christian Communities," in *Vereine, Synagogen und Gemeinden im Kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien*, ed. Andreas Gutsfeld and Dietrich-Alex Koch, STAC 25 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 149-184.

[113] Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 79. Ascough also argues against "common teachings and practices" which some try to trace throughout Paul's letters. See, Ascough, "Translocal Relationships," 239 n.82.

[114] Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as Civic Assembly*, 116. E.g., *IG II²* 337, *IG II²* 1117, *CIG* 5853; Ascough, "Translocal Relationships," 228-234.

[115] Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as Civic Assembly*, 116.

[116] See, Rom 16:1, 4, 5, 16, 23; 1 Cor 1:2; 4:17; 6:4; 7:17; 10:32; 11:16, 18, 22; 12:28; 14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 33, 34, 35; 15:9; 16:1, 19 (twice); 2 Cor 1:1; 8:1, 18, 19, 23, 24; 11:8, 28; 12:13; Gal 1:2, 13, 22; Phil 3:6;

that Paul did not introduce this term into early Christianity.[117] He even recounts how he persecuted the "church of God" (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13), suggesting the term may have been previously used to acknowledge the assembly of Christ believers in Jerusalem.[118] Nonetheless, Paul's approach to the term is distinctive because he incorporates into his letters a *new reality* which is conveyed by its use.

Contextualizing the Term Ἐκκλησία in the Undisputed Pauline Letters

Paul preaches a *new reality*. This new reality is one were Christ becomes intimately involved in the community, evoking a sense of solidarity among the various assemblies. As I will argue, Paul understands God working within the ἐκκλησία, but this notion is predicated on God working "in Christ" (ἐν χριστῷ) (e.g. 1 Thess 2:13). This section will proceed to distinguish Paul's use of the term ἐκκλησία. Then, I will attempt to show how these assemblies are united as a unique ἐκκλησία, by means of their faith in Christ. Finally, we will inquire into how Paul understood his relationship, and that of the ἐκκλησία, with their greater sociopolitical environment.

4:15; 1 Thess 1:1; 2:14; Phlm 2. Notice that the instances of the term ἐκκλησία found in 1 Cor 4:17 and Phil 4:15 are grammatically singular, but plural in meaning; cf. Karl L. Schmidt, "ἐκκλησία," *TDNT* 3:501-536.

[117] Scholars tend to agree that early Christian usage of the term ἐκκλησία predates Paul. See, Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1951), 1.94; Jürgen Becker, *Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 426-427; Ekkehard Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of its First Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 263. See, Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as Civic Assembly*, 98-99; Schmidt, *TDNT* 3:507.

[118] The origin of the phrase "church of God" is still debated. See, Klaus Berger, "Volksversammlung und Gemeinde Gottes. Zu den Anfängen der christlichen Verwendung von 'ekklesia,'" *ZTK* 73 (1976): 167-207, especially 198-207. Also, Martin Hengell, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 83.

Young-Ho Park distinguishes five typical contexts for Paul's use of the term ἐκκλησία.[119]

The instances of ἐκκλησία in Paul's letters can be classified according to five categories: 1)

greetings; 2) translocal relationships between Paul's assemblies; 3) a plenary assembly as

opposed to house groups; 4) the human abuse of the divine assembly; 5) and titles of *church*

officials.[120] I will not reiterate the entirety of Park's important study. Rather, I will focus most on

the first three categories, since they are directly related to Paul's treatment of a *new reality* in

Christ.

In the instances where Paul uses the term ἐκκλησία in the greetings of his letters (see, 1

Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:2, 13, 22; 1 Thess 1:1; Philm 1:2), it is best to understand the term within

its epistolary setting.[121] In one sense, the term ἐκκλησία was used during the Hellenistic age to

describe the primary assembly of the *inhabitants* of a *district*, *village*, or *country* (δῆμος). During

this period, the ἐκκλησία was the actual gathering of the people rather than an abstract idea of

community or specific institution.[122] Often times, directly writing to a δῆμος and addressing its

inhabitants as one unified entity was quite meaningful because the sender acknowledged their

importance within a civic context.[123] As previously suggested, the Septuagint's use of ἐκκλησία

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[119] Here, I follow closely the work of Young-Ho Park whose contextualizing of Paul's use of ἐκκλησία I find most convincing. See, Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as Civic Assembly*, 103-124.

[120] Ibid., 103.

[121] Cf. Sean A. Adams, "Paul's Letter Opening and Greek Epistolography: A Matter of Relationship," in *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Sean A. Adams (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 33-56.

[122] Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as Civic Assembly*, 11.

[123] Ibid., 105-106.

referred to the gathering of the whole people, which was called to reaffirm the assembly at Sinai at the giving of the Decalogue. Park suggests that in Paul's greetings, where he uses ἐκκλησία, Paul "not only enhances the status of the recipients but also acquired for himself an honorary platform from which to speak to the ἐκκλησία, the gem of the civic glory of the Greek πόλεις."[124] This is further evidenced by Paul's formula of greeting.

When Paul introduces himself in the greetings of his letters, he often included a title for himself such as δοῦλος (Rom 1:1; Phil 1:1), ἀπόστολος (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1), or δέσμιος (Phlm 1).[125] Paul honors these communities by writing to them, giving these assemblies a sense of high-status. In many ways, those communities he addressed as ἐκκλησία are being honored. Though we will see how ἐκκλησίαι has a universal and translocal understanding, Paul's greeting to each ἐκκλησία should be understood as a greeting to that local community. David A. DeSilva, commenting on Paul's greeting to the Thessalonian believers, suggests that by addressing the group as an ἐκκλησία, he is granting them a "supra-local" honor.[126] The Thessalonians are being positively recognized because of their "eager reception of the gospel,

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[124] Ibid., 106.

[125] It is only 1 Thessalonians that Paul does not add a title to his name. Charles A. Wanamaker suggests that in Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, and Galatians that Paul's status as apostle and his authority were matters of contention. In his greetings of the Philippians and Philemon Paul tries to empathize with his audience. 1 Thessalonians does not suggest that Paul's authority was in question. Furthermore, Paul's situation while writing to the Thessalonian believers was not as precarious as it was when writing to the Philippians or to Philemon. See, Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 68. Similar arguments are made by, Ben Witherington, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 48; Jeffrey A.D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 65-66. Cf. Adams, "Paul's Letter Opening," 51.

[126] David A. DeSilva, "'Worthy of His Kingdom': Honor Discourse and Social Engineering in 1 Thessalonians," *JSNT* 64 (1996): 49-79, 70.

their welcome of God's emissaries, and their endurance of affliction."[127] Moreover, Paul, in attaching titles to himself (likely a result of dispute about his authority or for the sake of empathy) grants himself an authority over the recipients of the letter. Samuel Byrskog observes that Paul's inclusion of titles for himself, paying particular attention to Romans, is Paul's attempt at laying out his credentials for writing a letter.[128] Furthermore, Paul suggests in 1-2 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1) and in Galatians (1:1, 11-12) that his authority was granted to him by God and is therefore qualified to preach the gospel of Christ to them.[129]

Addressing a group as an ἐκκλησία has translocal connotations. Though I will discuss in more detail the translocal system which Paul is promoting in the following chapter, I will make a few comments here. Paul does not use the term ἐκκλησία to refer to the multiple house groups which could be in one area. Rather, he uses the plural ἐκκλησίαι to address multiple assemblies in a certain province: 1 Cor 16:1 (Galatia), 19 (Asia); 2 Cor 8:1 (Macedonia); Gal 1:2; 1:22 (Judea); 1 Thess 2:14 (Judea). Or he uses the term with modifiers such as *all*, *every*, *no*, *other*, or by the adverb *everywhere* (1 Cor 7:17; 11:16; 14:33; 2 Cor 8:18).[130] He can refer to all the ἐκκλησίαι as "gentile" (Rom 16:4) or generally as "all the churches of Christ" (Rom 16:6). As previously noted, Ascough disagrees that Paul sought to establish translocal links between his

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[127] Ibid., 70.

[128] Samuel Byrskog, "Epistolography, Rhetoric and Letter Prescript: Romans 1.1-7 as a Test Case," *JSNT* 65 (1997): 27-46, 37.

[129] Adams, "Paul's Letter Opening," 52.

[130] Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as Civic Assembly*, 113.

communities.[131] But I agree with Park who suggests that Paul was not trying to establish a uniform structure among the assemblies, but Paul was trying to establish a shared custom among the assemblies.[132] This shared custom is emphasized by God's work in the ἐκκλησία, and it is Paul's attempt at constructing a new reality which believers are now engaged in. Ultimately, God works within the ἐκκλησία but the ἐκκλησία also belongs to God.

One notices that in Paul's letters he never refers to the ἐκκλησία as belonging to one person or one group of people. In Paul's letters, there is a strong distinction between the plenary assembly and the numerous house groups.[133] On two occasions Paul uses the phrase "the whole church" (Rom 16:24; ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας: 1 Cor 14:23; ἡ ἐκκλησία ὅλη). Moreover, notice that without the adjective "whole," ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ can also refer to the plenary assembly (e.g., 1 Cor 11:18; 14:19, 28, 35). In this context, Paul was intentionally distinguishing the plenary meeting of believers in Corinth from the other smaller gatherings which could be expressed by the term οἶκος (1 Cor 11:34; 14:35; ἐν οἴκῳ: Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Phlm 1:2; ἡ κατ'οἶκον ... ἐκκλησία). When Paul refers to the "whole church" he is not referring to the "universal church" as proposed by Ernst Käsemann.[134] It is, nevertheless, a coming together of the entire Corinthian community "as one" (1 Cor 11:20; 14:23; ἐπί τό αὐτό). When they come together as one (1 Cor 11:20; σνερχομένων οὖν ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ), they not only celebrate the Lord's supper but also had a

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[131] Cf. Ascough, "Translocal Relationships."

[132] Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as Civic Assembly*, 117-118.

[133] Ibid., 116, 152-157.

[134] Abraham Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 97. Cf. Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 598.

kind of symposium.[135] Whenever they come together, they come together as the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ.

The "whole church" is also mentioned in Romans 16:23. Gaius, Paul says, not only hosted him but also the whole assembly. We learn that Paul had baptized Gaius and his household in 1 Cor 1:14. That Gaius was able to be a host and provide for the "whole church" at Corinth suggests that he was wealthy.[136] Also, notice how Gaius is a "host" (ξένος) to the whole church as opposed to the church, in some fashion, belonging to him. Nevertheless, the adjective "whole" would be unnecessary if the Corinthian believers met only as a single group.[137] The adverb "whole" in 1 Corinthians 14:23 further illustrates that all the believers from various house assemblies would meet in some way, at the expense and hospitality of Gaius.[138]

Regarding the relationship between οἶκος and ἐκκλησία, it is important to note that Paul rarely uses οἶκος to describe his understanding of the assemblies of Christ believers.[139] The

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[135] Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, SP 7, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 508.

[136] Cf. Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2011), 598.

[137] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1996), 267.

[138] Robert J. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 38. Cf. Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 683. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, 267 tries to estimate the size of the Corinthian plenary assembly by analyzing archaeological evidence from Corinth. David Horrell, "Domestic Space and Christian Meetings at Corinth: Imagining New Contexts and the Buildings East of the Theatre," *NTS* 27 (2004): 349-369, suggests that there should be caution when employing archaeological evidence in such historical studies. Ultimately, Horrell, who further develops the argument of Murphy-O'Connor says that their reconstructions of the Corinthian plenary assembly are "entirely imaginative" due to the present state of archaeological evidence. See ibid., 368.

[139] Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as Civic Assembly*, 127.

phrase ἡ κατ᾽οἶκον ... ἐκκλησία is only used three times in his letters (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Phlm 2).[140] It is never used to describe more than one group in a city and never used to describe any Corinthian group.[141] Paul did not want the notion of ἐκκλησία to have solely a household connotation, or to be associated with one person or family. Rather, the assembly was gathered within the house but was never associated with the house itself. The assembly did not belong to any one person. The ἐκκλησία, however, did belong to God (e.g. 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1; ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ). The Pauline ἐκκλησία should not be understood as a household phenomenon, but rather having public dimensions. As Park observes, the "civic tone of the word ἐκκλησία substantially helped Paul in this struggle by reminding his audience of the public dimension of the church."[142] For this reason Paul rarely uses the term ἐκκλησία for household, even though the vast majority of Christ believers met within households.

In this section, I have explained the context in which Paul employs the term ἐκκλησία. In his greetings, Paul honored his communities by addressing them as an ἐκκλησία as well as granting them a new identity as the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ. This ἐκκλησία remained distinct from the household, and therefore Paul refrains from identifying a smaller gathering of Christ believers as an ἐκκλησία belonging to one person. The ἐκκλησία did meet regularly at the house of patrons but the term is never associated with that person. Rather, as already mentioned, the ἐκκλησία

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[140] See, Hans-Josef Klause, *Hausgemeinde und Hauskirche im frühen Christentum* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1981). Also, Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004).

[141] Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as Civic Assembly*, 127.

[142] Ibid., 133.

belongs to God and to no one else. Paul understands his assemblies to be the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ, and he sought to create a new reality which these Christ believers now lived in.

Paul and the Language of Politics

Thus far, it has been argued that Paul shared certain affinities with Greco-Roman voluntary associations while, in various ways, remaining distinct. Not only was Paul's terminology for his groups different (e.g., ἐκκλησία/ἐκκλησίαι), but he also tried to build relationships between the communities by means of his gospel.[143] This information raises a question; how does Paul ultimately understand his relationship, and that of his communities, to the wider Greco-Roman world? Though I will develop an answer to this question in chapter five of this dissertation, I think it appropriate to make a few preliminary observations here.

Diaspora Jewish associations were complex in nature, especially when it came to their rights to congregate and worship.[144] A large-scale observation of Jewish assemblies suggests that they could "adopt, adapt, and develop ways of finding a place within civic society akin to the ways of other socioreligious groups in that setting."[145] Though Jewish assemblies could in fact assimilate in several ways with the greater Greco-Roman world, they rejected many other aspects

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[143] Other differences include Paul's linear worldview; that time would ultimately end at the Parousia (e.g., 1 Cor 1:7-8; 4:5; 15:20-28; Phil 3:20-21; 1 Thess 1:9-19; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 5:1-11, 23). Also, one may conjecture that Paul's assemblies did not require mandatory fees for joining as did other voluntary associations, nor did he require fees for group infractions (For initiation fees see e.g., *AGRW* 310 = *CIL* XIV 2112 = *ILS* 7212 [Lanuvium, 136 CE]; *AGRW* 7 = *IG* II² 1368 [Athens, 164/165 CE]; *AGRW* 243 = *IG* XII,3 330 [Thera, 210-195 BCE]. For fines see e.g., *AGRW* 7 = *IG* II² 1368 [Athens, 164/165 CE]; *AGRW* 301 = *PMich* V 244 [Tebtynis-Fayum, 43 CE]; *Philippi* II 133/G441 [Philippi, 2/3 century CE]).

[144] For a fuller discussion on this topic see e.g., Harland, *Associations, Synagogues and Congregations*, esp. 200 -210; Harland, *Dynamics of Identity* esp. 23-60.

[145] Harland, *Associations, Synagogues and Congregations¸*199.

of that society which were considered contrary to their own religious worldview. A similar act of assimilation can be seen with Christian groups in the second century.

It is not until the early second century CE do we have a better understanding of how some early Christian communities identified themselves, especially within their larger societal context. Pliny the Younger, appointed governor to Bithynia in 110 CE, in his correspondence with the emperor Trajan, describes the gatherings of Christians (*Christiani*). Of particular interest is how some Christians obeyed Trajan's edict restricting the meetings of associations.[146] He writes:

> They also declared that the sum total of their guilt or error amounted to no more than this: they had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day to chant verses alternately among themselves in honour of Christ as if to a god, and also to bind themselves by oath, not for any criminal purpose, but to abstain from theft, robbery and adultery, to commit no breach of trust and not to deny a deposit when called upon to restore it. After this ceremony it had been their custom to disperse and reassemble later to take food of an ordinary, harmless kind; *but they had in fact given up this practice since my edict, issued on your instructions, which banned all political societies* (*Ep.* 10.7-8 [Radice, LCL]).[147]

That Christians obeyed Trajan's edict likely meant that certain meetings, possibly those held at night, were avoided.[148] Moreover, the Roman government also recognized these Christian groups as a voluntary association. Pliny's attestation here demonstrates that by 110 CE some Christian groups, at least some of those in Bithynia, regarded themselves as associations and were recognized as such by the Roman authorities.

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[146] Cotter, "The Collegia and Roman Law," 82-86. Also, Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 43.

[147] Emphasis mine.

[148] Harland, *Dynamics of Identity*, 43.

Paul's self-understanding is unique, insofar as he does not understand his communities as Jewish assemblies or as voluntary associations. Rather, Paul's self-understanding lies somewhere between Jewish assemblies and voluntary associations. For Paul, I think, the issue is acculturation, which can be defined as contact of at least two autonomous cultural groups which eventually results in a "change in one or other of the two groups which results from contact."[149] In the context of Paul and the earliest movement of Christ followers, we should place acculturation in a framework of assimilation. Assimilation, in this regard, should be understood as acculturation without necessarily being integrated into the pervading culture.[150] Paul is on the cusp of forming a new religious identity, which is not completely Jewish and not completely Greco-Roman. Paul understands himself as a Jewish follower of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:13-14; 2:15 Phil 3:4-6). But faith in/of Jesus Christ means that he is no longer obligated to observe the Mosaic Law (Rom 2:16-29; 3:31; 8:3-4; 13:8-10; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:13, 22-24). But preaching Christ to a largely non-Jewish population meant he had to find ways to assimilate without giving up his religious worldview.

One example of assimilation I would like to draw on comes from 1 Cor 6:1-11 and 1 Cor 8:1-11:1. In 1 Cor 6:1-11, Paul addresses an issue of taking a fellow Christ believer to court. What is interesting in this passage is how Paul wants the believers to avoid the civic magistrates.

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[149] John W. Berry, "Acculturation as Varies of Adaption," in *Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings*, ed. Amado M. Padilla (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), 9-26, quote on p.9.

[150] See Milton M. Gordon, *Human Nature, Class, and Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). Also Amado M. Padilla, "The Role of Cultural Awareness and Ethnic Loyalty in Acculturation," in *Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings*, ed. Amado M. Padilla (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), 47-84.

Though some have conjectured as to the possible historical situation of the Corinthian believers, I am more interested in the reasoning Paul gives.[151] In a series of rhetorical questions Paul declares that those outside the community of "saints" are "unrighteous" (ἄδικος) and are unworthy to judge the matters of the saints (1 Cor 6:1). Furthermore, he asserts the saints will judge the world and even the angels (1 Cor 6:2).[152] Moreover, if there are disputes among the Corinthian believers they should not appoint anyone to judge matters of the community who "amount to nothing in the church" (τοὺς ἐξουθενημένους ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησία) (1 Cor 6:4). Paul, it seems, wants to create a separation between the Corinthian believers and those outside the community. Because the Corinthian believers are sanctified "in Christ" (1 Cor 6:11) they must not associate with the unrighteous (1 Cor 6:9-10), especially in matters relating to the ἐκκλησία.

But this notion of separation seems to regard internal relationships as opposed to external relationships. Externally, the Corinthian believers still associate with non-believers and may even sit at table with them (1 Cor 10:27; cf. 1 Cor 14:24-25).[153] Paul admonished his assembly to avoid food offered to idols, possibly because he wanted to keep the integrity and solidarity of this community he is building.[154] Paul is urging a singularity of purpose.[155] Even though cultural and ethnic factors may intrude on the assembly's *new reality*, they must continue to live in a

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[151] For a history of interpretation of 1 Cor 8-11 see, Trent A. Rogers, *Gods and Idols: Representations of God in 1 Cor 8-10*, WUNT 2/427 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 231-235, esp. 231-232 n.19; 233 n.21.

[152] On the difficulty of interpretation regarding Paul's mention of "judging the angels" see, Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 430-431.

[153] Barclay, "Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity," 57-60.

[154] Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 146.

[155] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 385.

manner worthy of the gospel and of Christ (1 Cor 1:21; 7:32; 10:5,33; cf. 9:27; 15:58). As a reward, they will be "saved in the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18).

Summary

Paul and his assemblies are assimilating to a dominant culture and Paul is striving to preach a *new reality* in which believers now live in. Though this new reality calls for adherence to a particular way of life, believers still have a relationship with their civic society. Paul, therefore, proposes that in Christ there is a *new creation*. The *new creation* was inaugurated by the Christ event, and will be realized at the Parousia (e.g., Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17). This *new creation* encompasses this new reality but also promises both cosmological and anthropological transformations. It is a promise of a world to come, while currently living in and negotiating with a world which is ultimately fading away. The topic of *new creation* will be the subject of chapter five.

Conclusion

This chapter contextualized Paul and the Pauline assemblies. Our closest parallel to Pauline assemblies in the ancient world are Greco-Roman voluntary associations. The general function of a voluntary association was to encourage sociability among the membership while, simultaneously, worshipping the association's patron deity. The deity would then protect the group and individual members in their daily lives outside of their association. Associations also created social networks among the members and benefactors, which granted both economic and social advantages. Voluntary associations also offered members a sense of belonging, which encouraged a positive feeling for their *polis*. In summary, the voluntary association allowed all

peoples of varied social status to reap the benefits of membership. Voluntary associations become a backdrop to the discussion of Pauline assemblies.

Pauline assemblies, ἐκκλησίαι, were Paul's attempt at assimilating to his Greco-Roman setting. Though Paul's definition of ἐκκλησία depended on Jewish (Septuagint) and Greco-Roman contexts (voluntary associations), Paul made the term his own. The ἐκκλησία became an association, of sorts, that provided its members with internal benefits. Such benefits included the creation of new social networks. But, unlike voluntary associations, Paul's associations offered a new way of life which promised a physical transformation of the body and cosmic transformation of the world. To join a Pauline assembly meant that you believed and lived by the gospel of Christ. To live by the gospel meant that you were engaged in a new reality which included being filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit of God, being transformed, and having faith. To have this Spirit meant you were sanctified and have begun a transformation which would set you apart from the mundane world. This notion will be further developed in the following chapter.

Paul embraces a view of the cosmos which encompasses both a new reality and a *new creation*. Paul was little concerned with the Roman Empire. It seems to be the case that Paul was in no way politically subversive, but he did expect his communities to live in a way which was worthy of the gospel of Christ. Paul's understanding of new creation embraces both a new cosmology and a new anthropology which are intrinsically linked to the Christ event. In the following chapter, I attempt to show how the Christ event is central to the concepts of "newness" and "creation." Paul's enemy is not the Roman Empire; Paul preaches deliverance or vindication not over human enemies, but over the cosmic forces of death and decay (Rom 8-11).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHRIST-EVENT: ΚΟΣΜΟΣ AND ΚΑΙΝΗ ΚΤΙΣΙΣ

Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have attempted to show that Paul does not use figured speech to

undermine the Roman Empire or to relay covert messages of sedition to his communities. I have

also argued that Paul assimilated to his Greco-Roman environment by drawing on the

commonalities of voluntary associations in order to create his own unique communities of Christ

believers. But his communities were not completely modeled on the voluntary association, or on

Jewish associations. Believers in Paul's communities were called to live a harmonious and

ethical life, centered on the gospel of Christ. Paul called his communities to live in a new reality.

In this new reality, the believer's primary allegiance is to their community. But, as I have argued,

Paul suggested to his communities that even though they live in this new reality, believers still

have a commitment to their larger civic community (e.g. Rom 13:1–7).[1]

Though Paul was not anti-imperial, he did not suggest that Rome was saved. The entire

world, including Rome, will ultimately fade away as a consequence of the Christ-event. Paul

relativizes the place of the Roman Empire and includes it, although not in any explicit terms, in

his critique of the κόσμος. For Paul, the Christ-event was the pivotal moment in time which

changed the course of history. The Christ-event in Paul's theology is the inaugural event for what

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[1] Also see Paul's larger exhortation in Roman 12–15, commanding believers to live a moral and
harmonious life. See chapter four of this study.

he calls the "new creation" (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17). If you are "in Christ," you are a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17).

The primary focus of this chapter will be understanding the Pauline distinction between κόσμος and καινὴ κτίσις, and their cosmological and anthropological significance in Paul's eschatological soteriology. The scope of this question is broad, and scholars have devoted much time to this topic.[2] The intention of this chapter, however, is to understand how the dichotomy between κόσμος and καινὴ κτίσις characterizes Paul's nuanced relationship to the empire. The first section of this chapter will contextualize Paul's use of the term κόσμος. In 1 Corinthians and Romans, Paul describes the *world* as the arena of sin and death, where they reign over fallen humanity. Though Paul's description of κόσμος changes across his letters, the point remains that, ultimately, sin and death reign over humanity and over creation. It is the Christ-event which has given hope to fallen humanity and to fallen creation.

The second section of this chapter will ask how humanity's relationship to the κόσμος is affected by the Christ-event, which has inaugurated the *new creation* (καινὴ κτίσις). This section will be highlighted by three passages where the terms κτίσις/καινὴ κτίσις appear: Gal 6:11–18; 2 Cor 5:11–21; Rom 8:18–22. In each case, Paul emphasizes how the Christ-event reshaped the

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[2] E.g. see, Gerhard Schneider, "Die Idee der Neuschöpfung beim Apostel Paulus und ihr religionsgeschichtlicher Hintergrund," *TThZ* 68 (1959): 257–270; Peter Stuhlmacher, "Erwägungen zum ontologischen Charakter der ΚΑΙΝΗ ΚΤΙΣΙΣ bei Paulus," *EvTh* 27 (1967): 1–35; Ulrich Mell, *Neue Schöpfung: eine traditionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Studie zu einem soteriologischen Grundsatz paulinischer Theologie*, BZNW 56 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989); Edward Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul's Cosmological Language* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000); Moyer V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thought*, SNTSMS 119 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); T. Ryan Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters: A Study of the Historical and Social Setting of a Pauline Concept*, WUNT 2/272 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

course of time. In the final section of this chapter, Paul's use of the phrases "in Adam" and "in Christ" will be broadly examined. In establishing a translocal ethic across his communities, Paul suggests that to be "in Adam" is to be of the fading world, but to be "in Christ" is to be of the new creation. Though Paul does not directly mention Rome or the empire, Rome would likely fall under the category of being "in Adam." Therefore, Paul's eschatology and soteriology will be at issue.

Paul's eschatological soteriology functions on two different levels. The first level is cosmological, where Paul deals with the Christ-event and its implications on the cosmic forces of sin and death. The second level is anthropological, where Paul deals with the Christ-event and its implications on humanity's relationship to the κόσμος and to the καινὴ κτίσις. The cosmological level is highlighted by the Christ-event proper, while the anthropological level is highlighted by entering into the new creation. One enters the new creation by being "in Christ" which occurs by means of faith and baptism.

Κόσμος in Pauline Theology

Introduction

Hans Dieter Betz summarizes Paul's eschatology and soteriology suggesting that salvation is based on: 1) the death and resurrection of Christ; 2) the "putting on" of, and dying and rising with Christ in baptism (e.g. Gal 3:26–28; Rom 6:3–4); 3) the gift of the Spirit of God (e.g. Gal 3:2–5; 5:16–25); 4) living in a "new creation" (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17).[3] From Betz's summary, one may draw the conclusion that salvation for Paul depends on whether or not one is "in Christ."

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[3] Hans Dieter Betz, "Paul," *ABD* 5:186–201, esp. 196.

For Paul, the phrase "in Christ" or "in the Lord" has several meanings.[4] But he emphasizes that to be in Christ is not merely "to believe" in Jesus. To be "in Christ" is to share in a lived experience with the risen Lord (cf. 1 Cor 4:15; 2 Cor 2:17; Gal 2:19–24; 4:13; 5:10; Phil 2:29).[5] "New creation" (καινὴ κτίσις) is a Pauline phrase, explicitly used twice in his letters, that recapitulates Paul's eschatological soteriology (see Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17). To participate in the new creation is to participate in a renewal of the individual believer, of the Pauline assemblies, and of the "world" (κόσμος).[6] It is a concept which expresses the cessation of a *sinful* way of life in exchange for a more moral life in Christ.

Because Paul insists that there exists a new creation in Christ, it implies that there is an *old creation* not of Christ. Paul characterizes the *old creation* by primarily using the word κόσμος and/or the phrase "in Adam" (κόσμος; 1 Cor 1:20–21, 26–28; 2:12; 8:4–6; Adam motif; 1 Cor 15:21–22, 45–49; Rom 5:12–21).[7]   The old way of life is one that encapsulates a *sinful* living

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[4] For the different ways that Paul uses the interchangeable phrases of "in Christ" and "in the Lord" see, James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 397–399.

[5] Ibid., 400.

[6] Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters*, 233.

[7] On language of "cosmos" and "creation" in Paul see, Adams, *Constructing the World*, *passim.* On the figure of Adam and Paul's use of the phrase "in Adam" see, e.g., N.T. Wright, "Adam in Paul Chronology," in *SBL Seminar Papers*, vol. 22 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1983), 359–389; Felipe De Jesús Legarreta-Castillo, *The Figure of Adam in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15: The New Creation and Its Ethical and Social Reconfiguration* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014). Laegarreta-Castillo's state of the question is the most up to date summary on scholarly work investigating the Adam motif in Paul, see ibid., 5–32.

prior to one's faith in Christ. Once you are "in Christ" you are a "new creation" and must conduct your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (cf. Phil 1:27).[8]

In this section I shall explain how Paul uses language of κόσμος ("world") to create an antithesis to the καινὴ κτίσις ("new creation"). It should be noted that Paul's description of κόσμος does shift between 1 Corinthians and Romans. As we shall see, κόσμος as described in 1 Corinthians is in direct opposition to God. In Romans, however, κόσμος is opposed to God insofar as it is directly affected by "sin" (ἁμαρτία).[9] But whether Paul explains the "world" as sinful or as corrupted by sin, it has a direct effect on humanity. [10] Paul's purpose in using these terms to describe faith in Christ is to encourage believers to live out their faith in Christ, and this life in Christ will lead those who are suffering to resurrection and life–everlasting.[11]

Sin and Death: Κόσμος

How does Paul understand κόσμος in relationship to humanity? In Romans, Paul only sees two power structures at work in the world; sin and death (Rom 6:12–13; 7:4–6; 7:22–8:2; cf.

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[8] The fulfilling of the "law of Christ" (Gal 6:2) is important to this discussion. See, John M. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2005), esp. 125–142.

[9] I am indebted to the work of Edward Adams who demonstrates this relationship in his work. See, ibid., *Constructing the World*, *passim*. A similar argument is made by Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters*, 152–155.

[10] Neil Elliott, however, argues for a political reading of cosmos and creation in Paul, especially in Romans 8–9. See idem., "Creation, Cosmos, and Conflict in Romans 8–9" in *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8*, ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), 131–156.

[11] See Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia: ed. Helmut Koester (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 519; N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, vol. 3 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (London: SPCK, 2003), 365–366.

I Cor 15:21–22). Considering the Christ-event, Paul understands that the world, and all that exists therein, is under the power of sin. The consequence of sin is death (Rom 5:12–14).[12] In I Corinthians, Paul suggests that the κόσμος is intrinsically linked with several negative aspects including "flesh" (σάρξ) and "death" (θάνατος) (e.g. I Cor 10:18; 15:26).[13] Similarly, in Paul's letter to the Galatians both the "flesh" and the "Law" are cosmic powers warring with the Spirit of God (Gal 3:23–25; 4:5–6; cf. 1:4; 6:14).[14] Paul suggests that the κόσμος, exemplified by the sins of the σάρξ, has come under judgment because of the Christ-event (Gal 6:14).[15]

For Paul, the world could either be understood as sinful (opposed to God) or corrupted on account of sin.[16] A study contextualizing Paul's use of κόσμος in each of his letters, where the term appears, is beyond the scope of this study. I would like to draw on several examples from his letters, however, which best illustrate Paul's negative connotations of κόσμος.[17] As I will

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[12] John M.G. Barclay, "Under Grace: The Christ-Gift and the Construction of a Christian Habitus" in *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8*, ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), 59–76, esp. 59.

[13] When Paul places the "flesh" against the "Spirit", an apparent antithesis arises; "For the mindset of the flesh is death, but the mindset of the Spirit is life" (Rom 8:6). See Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 64–68.

[14] Rodrigo J. Morales, *The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel: New Exodus and New Creation Motifs in Galatians*, WUNT 2/282 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 143.

[15] Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters*, 91. Cf. Marinus C. De Boer, "The Meaning of the Phrase ΤΑ ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ in Galatians," *NTS* 53 (2007): 204–224.

[16] Notice how Paul's description of κόσμος in I Cor is disorderly, whereas in Romans the κόσμος is ordered but corrupted because of sin entering the world. See Adams, *Constructing the World*, *passim*.

[17] The noun κόσμος appears in Paul's undisputed letters 36 times. See Rom 1:8, 20; 3:6, 19; 4:13; 5:12, 13; 11:12, 15; I Cor 1:21, 27 [twice], 28; 2:12; 3:19, 22; 4:9, 13; 5:10 [twice]; 6:2 [twice]; 7:31 [twice], 33, 34; 8:4; 11:32; 14:10; 2 Cor 1:12; 5:19; 7:10; Gal 4:3; 6:14 [twice]; Phil 2:15.

argue, the κόσμος is controlled by the forces of sin and death. Rome does not seem to be a determinative factor in Paul's discussion of κόσμος, but the empire, along with all things that are not in Christ, will fade away. Ultimately, it will be shown how Paul's enemies are not of this world. Paul preaches deliverance and vindication not over human enemies but over the cosmic forces controlling/within the κόσμος which, are sin and death (cf. Rom 8–11).

Κόσμος, 1 Corinthians, and Romans

The term κόσμος has been used in Greek literature from the time of Homer and conveys the sense of *building* and *establishing*. The connotation is that of *order* or *adornment*. It can also connote *humanity*.[18] Generally, the meaning of *order* and *adornment* applies in the New Testament.[19] Though an in-depth analysis of the non-biblical and biblical usage of the term κόσμος would be insightful for this discussion, it will suffice to mention briefly the Greco-Roman antecedents of the term which Paul develops in some of his letters.[20]

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul's discussion of κόσμος depends on the standard Greek linguistic usage of the term. The term would have been understood positively by the Corinthians suggesting order, unity, beauty, adornment, etc.[21] When Paul uses this term, for

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[18] Herman Sasse, "κοσμέω, κόσμος, κτλ," TDNT 3:867–898.

[19] Ibid., 3:883.

[20] In the discussion of κόσμος, I am dependent upon the work of Edward Adams and his analysis of the term both in the larger Greco-Roman (philosophical) understanding, and also for his insights on the term's usage in the Septuagint and other Jewish literature. See idem., *Constructing the World*, 41–84. Cf. Werner Jaegar, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, vol. 1 of *Archaic Greece, the Mind of Athens*, trans. G. Hight (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 150–184; Sasse, *TDNT* 3:868–880; Horst R. Balz, "κόσμος," *EDNT* 2:309–312; J. Guhrt, "κόσμος," *NIDNTT* 1:517–526.

[21] Adams, *Constructing the World*, 100.

example in 1 Cor 1:20, it can either have the positive connotation of the whole created order or it could be understood in a more neutral sense.[22] The same holds true in his letter to the Romans (e.g. Rom 1:18; 3:19).[23]

In 1 Corinthians, Paul makes a distinction between "this age" (e.g. 1 Cor 3:18; ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος. Cf. 1 Cor 1:20) and the age to come (cf. 2 Cor 5:14–17). Paul links the κόσμος with "this age," and "this age" is associated with "foolishness" (μωρός). Paul writes,

> "Now (δέ) we have not received the spirit of the world (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου) but the Spirit that is from God (ὁ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ), so that we may know the things freely given to us by God. Which things we also speak, not in the learned words of men, but in learned [words] of the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things by means of the spiritual" (1 Cor 2:12–13).

Gordon Fee considers these two verses to be the central issue of the larger passage in 1 Cor 2:6–3:2. Fee proposes that the larger argument of this passage has to do with the Corinthian believers' "present fascination with wisdom and rhetoric, with their concurrent rejection of Paul's apostleship, [which] has issued in a rejection of the message of the cross … for something more akin to the Greek wisdom tradition …."[24] Paul seems to be suggesting that all believers, by means of the cross, are to live a life distinct from "the world;" a life which is in accordance with his gospel.

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[22] Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 165.

[23] Adams, *Constructing the World*, 155–156; Sasse, *TDNT* 3:893.

[24] Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 95. Similarly David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 91.

In 1 Cor 2:12–13 the "spirit of the world," in this context, should not be regarded as a demonic entity since it is not a rhetorical equivalent to "the Spirit from God."[25] The Spirit of God not only reveals divine wisdom but also communicates it. The spirit of the world, however, neither reveals divine wisdom nor communicates it.[26] Rather, as Gerd Theissen observes, the "spirit of the world" is a parallel to the "rulers of this age" (1 Cor 2:6).[27] Paul is making a distinction in the ways believers live with respect to the cross of Christ, as opposed to the way they lived prior to receiving the gospel. The cross meant a reorientation of life, embracing a new lifestyle which the Christ-event brings about (cf. 1 Cor 5:9–13; Gal 5:16–26).[28] The believers' reception of God's Spirit marks them off as distinct from the κόσμος. Moreover, Paul's use of the first-person plural in 1 Cor 2:12 (ἡμεῖς, ἐλάβομεν, εἰδῶμεν, ἡμῖν) draws a "social" distinction between Christ believers over against the κόσμος.[29] The reception and revelation of the Spirit calls believers to be ethically distinct from the world which is categorized by "foolishness."

Paul expands on this concept of ethical distinction in 1 Cor 5–6. Though Paul is concerned with issues of purity and immorality, his primary concern is how the community of

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[25] Adams, *Constructing the World,* 116; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 262. On the "spirit of the world" as a demonic antithesis to God's Spirit, see E. Earle Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity: New Testament Essays*, WUNT 18 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1978), 29–30.

[26] See Simo Frestadius, "The Spirit and Wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2:1–13," *JBPR* 1 (2011): 52–70.

[27] Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), 360–361. Cf. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 262.

[28] Theissen, *Psychological Aspects*, 378.

[29] Adams, *Constructing the World,* 116.

believers are to live a life which is pleasing to God (1 Cor 6:20).**30** In 5:9–10 Paul instructs the community not to "mingle with sexually immoral men" (συναναμίγνυσθαι πόρνοις).**31** Paul did not mean the sexually immoral, greedy, burglars, or idolaters of "this world" (οὐ πάντως … τοῦ κόσμου τούτου). These sexually immoral men, rather, are those who call themselves "brother" (ἀδελφός), likely someone from within their community of Christ believers. If a believer sought to disassociate with all immoral men, Paul admits "you must therefore depart from the world" (ὠφείλετε ἄρα ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελθεῖν) (1 Cor 5:10). Here, I would like to note two important points: the first point is that the κόσμος is where sinners/sin exist; the second point is that Paul's community must remain ethically distinct from the world.

As previously mentioned, ὁ κόσμος οὗτος carried with it negative connotations that may convey a "negative apocalyptic sense" in the Pauline letters.**32** As Adams observes, "the κόσμος is a world which is populated by immoral and corrupt people, so numerous that believers cannot avoid contact with them."**33** In 1 Cor 5:5 Paul suggests that those who are caught in incestuous acts are to be delivered "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh" (1 Cor 5:5a). In this verse "flesh" (σάρξ) is associated with the work of Satan, as that which is under Satan's influence.**34** It

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30 See Raymond F. Collins, *Frist Corinthians*, SP 7, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 203; Also, Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 78.

31 On the translation of συναναμίγνυμι as "mingle," see Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 185. Cf. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 409.

32 Adams, *Constructing the World,* 125.

33 Ibid.

34 See the observation of Trevor Oswald Ling, *The Significance of Satan* (London: SPCK, 1961), 40–42.

is the sins of the body (σῶμα) which prevent the Corinthian believers from being one with God

(cf. 1 Cor 6:17–20).[35] These deeds are understood within the realm of the unrighteous κόσμος (cf.

Gal 1:4). Sin, ultimately, will lead to death (cf. 1 Cor 15:56).

Corinthian believers cannot escape sin and death and must find a way to balance both

their life within the church, and their life within the κόσμος. Returning to 1 Cor 5:10b, Paul

admits that the only way to avoid the ethically immoral of this world is to "go out" from it. But

Paul is not suggesting a complete separation from the world itself. Adams suggests, "[Paul] is

merely indicating that his concern for the boundaries of the Corinthian church does not extend to

a desire for the congregation's complete separation from the rest of society."[36] Paul

acknowledges that there will always be contact with the outside world (1 Cor 6:1–11, 14–15; 7:40;

10:1–22), but warns about associating with such immoral peoples; "bad associations corrupts

good morals" (1 Cor 15:33b). What is to be understood in 1 Cor 5–6 is that which exists outside

the community of believers, the κόσμος, is a place of sin and death where Satan rules. For this

reason, the community of Christ believers must remain distinct in their ethical and moral

behavior.

Κόσμος in 1 Corinthians is where Satan rules and where immorality abounds. God,

however, will have the final action in the judgment of "this world." Following the discourse on

the celebration of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17–26), Paul stresses that whoever partakes of the

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[35] In 1 Cor 5:5 the noun σάρξ seems to be synonymous with the noun σῶμα. George E. Ladd [*A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 469 n.4] lists the use of σάρξ in 1 Cor 5:5 as an ethical use of the term. Cf. Barth Campbell, "Flesh and Spirit in 1 Cor 5:5: An Exercise in Rhetorical Criticism of the NT," *JETS* 36 (1993): 331–342.

[36] Adams, *Constructing the World*, 125.

Lord's Supper unworthily will bring judgment upon themselves (1 Cor 11:27–34). The concern in this pericope is judgment. Paul incorporates judicial language into this pericope to emphasize how improper moral behavior within the church will lead to suffering and death (11:29–30, 32). Paul uses the rhetorical device of *paronomasia*, which is the repetition of the same word stem in close proximity, to emphasize the judgment the community has incurred (κριν- κρίμα, διακρίνων, διεκρίνομεν, ἐκρινόμεθα, κρινόμενοι, κατακριθῶμεν, κρίμα).[37] As a community of Christ believers, they are bound to the Lord as one body (1 Cor 12:27) and any behavior which is unbecoming of their faith will bring only judgment and death. Of interest to this study is how Paul links their judgment to that of the κόσμος. He makes a distinction between the believers and the world. For Paul, Christ believers exist within the world but are not of this world (cf. John 17:15–16).[38] Ultimately, when the world is judged by God, it will be condemned (1 Cor 11:32). Believers are disciplined now, so that they may not be brought to the same fate which awaits the κόσμος.[39]

Though the Corinthian believers associated the noun κόσμος with *order* and *adornment*, Paul's description of it was not as flattering.[40] The "world" is the domain of Satan, where sin reigns. Κόσμος, along with sin and death, becomes one of the main antagonists of this letter. If

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[37] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 436. Cf. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 898.

[38] Though the formulation "not of this world" is a Johannine notion, we see Paul's own understanding of this difference in his letters. This topic will be further explored later in this chapter, in the discussion on *new creation*.

[39] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 566.

[40] Adams calls this method a *defamiliarization* of the conventional use and understanding of κόσμος. See idem., *Constructing the World*, 105-149.

the believer is of the world, he will be judged unto death along with the world. For this reason, the believer must remain distinct from the world. Κόσμος, however, takes on a different connotation in Paul's letter to the Romans. As it will be shown, κόσμος is discussed positively by means of God's redemptive powers and in terms of God's "creation" (κτίσις).

The first instance in which κόσμος appears within the body of the letter (1:16–15:13) is in Rom 1:20. In Romans 1:18–3:20 Paul is developing an argument on the equal sinfulness of both Jew and gentile. The sub-proposition of the argument is that the wrath of God is revealed against all human ungodliness.[41] Ungodliness, at least in the context of this passage, is the notion that God's creation has forgotten its "creatureliness" and, as a result, sins against their Creator (cf. Rom 1:20, 25; 2:12). James Dunn highlights this notion in his definition of sin suggesting, "… sin is that power which makes human beings forget their creatureliness and dependence on God, that power which prevents humankind from recognizing its true nature …"[42] When Paul speaks of the κόσμος in 1:20, the term connotes positive aspects of *order* and *adornment*. Since its creation (κτίσις), God has endowed the κόσμος and all of God's creation (ποίημα) with God's deity so that even the gentiles could clearly perceive (νοούμενα καθορᾶται) God's eternal power in the things God has fashioned.[43]

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[41] On the structure, genre, and purposes of Romans see, Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 79–103. For a discussion of the argument of 1:18–3:20 see, idem., 104–123. See also James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, WBC 38A (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 51–162.

[42] Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 112.

[43] On the possible Hellenistic Jewish influence on Rom 1:20 see, Dunn, *Romans*, 57-58; Craig S. Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 12.

Paul suggests that the revealed knowledge of God is perceivable in and through the κόσμος. What is revealed is God's eternal power, and divinity. Yet the gentiles ignored God's divinity in the κόσμος; they have forgotten to worship the Creator and instead worship the creature (Rom 1:25). The gentiles are the cause of their own sinfulness, not because of the κόσμος but because they have ignored God's revelation in God's creation. Ultimately, the κόσμος carries positive connotations in this passage and throughout Romans. Adams observes:

> The revelation of which the κόσμος is the instrument, then, has to be judged as a positive one. It is sufficient in itself to lead human beings into a worshipful relationship with God. That it has a negative outcome, securing the condemnation of the disobedient Gentiles, is due to its subversion by sinfulness. Even the incriminatory effect of the revelation, Paul leaves his readers in no doubt, is fully part of God's design …. The revelation through the κόσμος, in the thought of Romans, stands in a positive relation to the gospel. And it prepares for and finds its fulfillment in God's climactic revelation in Christ.[44]

The positivity associated with the κόσμος in Romans is especially distinct when comparing it to the negative connotations of this term in 1 Corinthians.

In 1 Cor 1:20, Paul calls the wisdom of the world "foolish." By employing the aorist active of μωραίνω (*I make foolish*, *I show to be foolish*), Paul emphasizes how God has shown the κόσμος to be the realm of foolishness. [45] The "world" is where sin abounds because it has been shown by God to be *foolish*. Paul uses this same verb, μωραίνω, in Rom 1:22 but as an aorist passive (*to become* foolish). Here, "foolishness" is associated with those gentiles who have failed to recognize the Creator. The gentile becomes foolish on account of the κόσμος. In Romans the world and creation (κτίσις) are overtaken by the cosmic forces of sin and death.

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[44] Adams, *Constructing the World*, 161.

[45] Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 165. Cf. G. Bertram, "μωρός. μωραίνω, κτλ," *TDNT* 4:832–847.

Paul, in the passage in Rom 5:1–7:25, is making a rhetorical argument for his understanding of faith and righteousness, apart from observance of the Mosaic Law. In Rom 5:1–5, Paul offers the sub-proposition of his argument by means of an ethical exhortation. Paul emphasizes that the Law of Moses no longer brings righteousness, because the believers have been justified by faith in/of Christ. This faith in Christ is not devoid of ethical obligations but is ethically more rigorous than the Mosaic Law. The passage in Rom 5:12-21 draws on the significance of Christ's death by comparing and contrasting Adam, the biblical progenitor of humanity, and Christ.[46] In this passage, the κόσμος is not hostile to God but is occupied by the cosmic forces of sin and death.

In Rom 5:12-14 Paul draws on the figure of Adam and how Adam's sin led to death, and how both sin and death eventually *infected* all of humanity.[47] The term κόσμος appears twice in these verses. In the first instance Paul writes, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world and death on account of sin, thus death came to all mankind, inasmuch as all have sinned (Rom 5:12)." In this passage, the κόσμος seems to be occupied by sin, "which entered the world" (εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν). Adam's transgression had cosmological implications; the world was

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[46] For studies on this topic see, Charles K. Barrett, *First Adam to Last: A Study in Pauline Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962); Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966); Richard H. Bell, "The Myth of Adam and the Myth of Christ in Romans 5.12-21," in *Paul, Luke and the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of A.J.M Wedderburn*, JSNTSup 217, ed. Alf Christophersen et al., (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 21–36.

[47] Paul's use of Gen 1–3 is evident in this passage. For a study in early Jewish interpretations of Gen 1–3, and the variety of early Jewish interpretations of Adam see, John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: From Sirach to 2 Baruch*, JSPSup 1 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988). Gen 1–3 is also treated by Hellenistic Jewish authors, e.g., Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 167–177.

initially good because sin and death were not a part of God's original creation.[48] But on account of Adam's sin, all humanity now bears the responsibility for sin.[49] Humanity's place within the κόσμος, on account of Adam's sin and their transgressions, is a "disorientation and contradiction of God's creative aims."[50]

The second instance of the term κόσμος appears in Rom 5:13-14. Paul writes:

> For up to the time of the Law, sin was in the world, but sin is not reckoned when there is no Law. But death reigned (ἐβασίλευσεν) from Adam until Moses and even over those whose sins were not like the transgressions of Adam who is a type of the one who was to come.

Like Rom 5:12, the κόσμος is not equivalent to sin and death as it is in 1 Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor 1:20, 21; 3:19, 22). The powers of sin and death have invaded the world, and in some sense, have taken control (βασιλεύω) of the κόσμος. Death entered the world through sin and, as Paul emphasizes, "sin reigned through death" (ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ, Rom 5:21). Death becomes the end result of sin, and death is the final and most climactic consequence of the power of sin (Rom 7:9–10, 13). Yet it is Christ who has set humanity, and subsequently all creation, free from the reign of death (Rom 7:15–17).

Summary

In 1 Corinthians and in Romans, the κόσμος becomes the arena where sin and death reign. In 1 Corinthians Paul takes the common understanding of κόσμος and reconfigures it. The κόσμος is not perceived as orderly but rather as unruly. It is the realm of Satan, where sins of the

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[48] Adams, *Constructing the World*, 173.

[49] See a similar interpretation in Hellenistic Jewish literature: 4 Ezra 3:21; 2 Bar. 3:21; 48:42; 54:15; Apoc. Mos. 14:2; LAB 13:8. Cf. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 180 esp. 180 n.58.

[50] Adams, *Constructing the World*, 173.

flesh are ubiquitous. If a believer seeks to avoid sin and death, they must practice virtue in spite of the world. Romans, however, treats the κόσμος as God's ordered creation which has been overtaken by the cosmic powers of sin and death. Though sin and death reign over the world, Christ will set all humanity free from its bondage to these cosmic forces. Yet in both of his letters, Paul stresses the role of sin and death as dominating forces. He even personifies them as a king who "rules" over God's creation (Rom 5:14, 17, 21). In 1 Corinthians, death becomes "the last enemy (ἐχθρός) to be destroyed" (1 Cor 15:26). It is interesting to note that even though Christ defeated death, death was only defeated by Christ's death. So too, death stands and waits for all humanity (Rom 7:24), but it is Christ who frees humanity from death's tyranny. But like humanity, even the κόσμος longs to be set free from the reign of death.

The Hope of All Creation: Καινὴ Κτίσις

In several instances, Paul emphasizes his eschatological soteriology in language of *dying* and *rising* with Christ (e.g. Rom 6:1–11; 7:4–6; 8:3–4; 2 Cor 5:14–21; Gal 2:19–20; 5:24–25; 6:14–16; Phil 3:8–11). As noted earlier, the Pauline notion of dying and rising with Christ falls under the topic of *creation* (κτίσις) and *new creation* (καινὴ κτίσις) (e.g. Rom 8:8–25; 2 Cor 4:17–18; cf. Rom 8:9–11, 18–25; 1 Cor 6:13–14; 15:20–28, 35–58; 2 Cor 4:13–14; 5:1–5; Gal 6:7–8; Phil 3:10–11, 20–21; 1 Thess 4:13–18; 5:23). Κόσμος therefore stands in direct opposition to the new creation in Christ. The κόσμος becomes the realm of Satan (1 Cor 5:5a) and is corrupted by sin. As a result, humanity inherits death (cf. Rom 7:9–10, 13).[51] Yet what is promised by the Christ-event is a renewal of both fallen humanity and fallen creation. A careful exegesis of Gal 6:11–18, 2 Cor 5:11

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[51] Recall that Paul does not have a unified cosmological which is stretched across his letters. What is universal, however, is the thought that sin and death reign in the world over against humanity.

–21, and Rom 8:18–22, where Paul explicitly writes about *creation* and *new creation*, reveals how the Christ-event involves not only the individual believer but all of God's creation. To make this argument, I propose that, for Paul, the Christ-event was the moment in which God inaugurated the new age. But if sin and death still reign within the κόσμος, this *new creation* will not be fully realized until the eschaton. All human history as well as all creation, is led towards death on account of sin. But it is the Christ-event, this gift of God, which has begun the final liberation of all creation from the effects of sin and death.[52]

Galatians 6:11–18

Paul's letter to the Galatians contains one of the only two instances of the phrase καινὴ κτίσις (Gal 6:15; cf. 2 Cor 5:17). This phrase appears in the letter's conclusion. In Betz's commentary on Galatians, he suggests that the postscript in Galatians serves as the *conclusio*, or *peroratio*, of this apologetic letter. Betz writes, "The general purpose of the *peroratio* is twofold: it serves as a last chance to remind the judge or the audience of the case, and it tries to make a strong emotional impression upon them."[53] In this passage, Paul highlights three matters which have been at the heart of his letter: 1) The motivation of the Judaizers (6:12–13); 2) the centrality of the cross of Christ (6:14); 3) the ethical and moral obligations of the Galatian Christ believers (6:15).[54] Of interest to this study is Gal 6:14–15 which recapitulates Paul's argument throughout the letter. Paul writes,

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[52] Cf. Barclay, "Under Grace," 59–60.

[53] Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1979), 313. Similarly, J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 559.

[54] See Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 301.

> But may I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world (κόσμος) has been crucified to me and I to the world (κόσμος). For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation (καινὴ κτίσις).

In 6:14, Paul is contrasting a false "boasting" from a true "boasting." It is not a boasting of what happened to Paul, namely circumcision, but what happened to him through Christ.[55] As a consequence of this boasting, Paul, as well as all those who boast in the cross of Christ, are a *new creation* (καινὴ κτίσις) (6:15). In this section, I will attempt to show how Paul's notion of *new creation* is an eschatological concept which takes prominence in this letter.

It is important to note that the phrase *new creation* was an established technical term in Jewish apocalyptic literature. Ulrich Mell shows that the phrase "new creation" refers to an expected destruction of the world and its renewal.[56] The phrase is also equated with a few other phrases such as "new heavens and new earth" (Isa 65:17; 66:22; 1 En. 91:15; LAB 3:10; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1), "renewed creation" (4 Ezra 7:75; 2 Bar. 32:6; 57:2; LAB 32:17; 16:3), "renewal" (1QS IV, 25), and "new world" (2 Bar. 44:12).[57] Moyer Hubbard also focuses on *new creation* in both Jubilees and in *Joseph and Aseneth*. Hubbard suggests that *new creation* is depicted as a movement from death to life and is described using vocabulary of "Spirit," "newness," and "life." Furthermore, he shows how Aseneth, in Jos. Asen., breaks with her pantheistic religion and is described using language of "new creation" (e.g. Jos. Asen. 16).[58] Though Paul may not be

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[55] Cf. Betz, *Galatians*, 318.

[56] E.g. Jub. 4; 1 En. 7:2; see Mell, *Neue Schöpfung*, *passim*.

[57] Mell, *Neue Schöpfung*, *passim*. Cf. Adams, *Constructing the World*, 226.

[58] Hubbard, *New Creation*, 60–70. Cf. Rees Conrad Douglas, "Liminality and Conversion in Joseph and Aseneth," *JSP* (1988): 31–42. For general works on Jos. Asen. see, Randall D. Chesnutt, "The Social Setting and Purpose of Joseph and Aseneth," *JSP* (1988): 21–48; Joseph C. O'Neil, "What is Joseph and Aseneth all About?" *Hen* 16 (1994): 189-198; Edith M. Humphrey, *Joseph and Aseneth* (Sheffield:

drawing on all of these Jewish sources for his cosmological understanding of *new creation*, it is important to observe that Paul's use of καινὴ κτίσις suggests that he is at least aware of this larger tradition. Paul, therefore, challenges not only the Mosaic Law but also the κόσμος by means of his *new creation* theology.

Paul's anthropological and cosmological understanding of *new creation* addresses a change in the individual and in the cosmic order. The term κόσμος appears three times in this letter: 4:3; 6:14 (twice). Notice in the *peroratio*, 6:14, that κόσμος is not only the realm of "circumcision" but also of "uncircumcision." If Betz is correct, then the mention of the κόσμος here and its relationship to "circumcision" and "uncircumcision" leads the reader back to Paul'sargument about the "elemental spirits of the world" in 4:3.[59] If one takes seriously his claim in 6:14, κόσμος is not simply just the "Jewish world of 'circumcision and uncircumcision'" but the κόσμος becomes the arena of Christ's victory over the forces of sin and death.[60] This notion is more fully appreciated in Paul's larger argument in Gal 3:26–4:11.

In Galatians, Paul is trying to dissuade the Galatian Christ believers from being circumcised and from observing the Mosaic Law.[61] Paul establishes the basic proposition of the

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Sheffield Academic, 2000); John J. Collins, "Joseph and Aseneth, Jewish or Christian?" *JSP* 14 (2005): 97–112.

[59] Betz suggests that Paul is incorporating the rhetorical technique or *enumeratio* or *recapitulatio* (ἀνακεφαλαίωσις) which sharpens and sums up the main points of Paul's argument. See, idem., *Galatians*, 313. Cf. Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, eds. David E. Orton and R. Dean Anderson, trans. Matthew T. Bliss et al. (Brill: Leiden, 1998), 206.

[60] Contra Hubbard, *New Creation*, 213.

[61] It is difficult to ascertain to what extent the Galatian believers were observing the Mosaic Law. It would be interesting to examine whether the Galatians were being persuaded to keep the entire Torah or only certain practices, like circumcision and *kashrut*. Cf. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 60–72.

letter in 2:15–21 suggesting that one is made righteous by faith in/of Jesus Christ and not by observance of the Mosaic Law. Paul's fourth proof in 3:26–4:11 is his appeal to their shared experience in baptism.[62] Ultimately, it is their baptism "in Christ" (ἐν Χριστῷ) which separates them from the *world*. In baptism they become sons of God and, both Jew and gentile, are delivered from bondage to the κόσμος. As Tobin observes, "Sonship and inheritance came through baptism and all that it implied and not through the law or its observance, which is slavery to the elemental principles of the universe."[63] Paul says that the Galatian believers are "in Christ Jesus." The reason that they are in Christ Jesus is that "as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (3:26).[64]

The verb βαπτίζω first appears in Gal 3:27. Paul is emphasizing that the one who comes to Christ by faith can only come into a relationship with Christ by means of baptism. Paul says that they have received the Spirit by the "hearing of faith" (3:2). It is this faith which leads to a life in the Spirit.[65] Baptism then becomes an action of the faithful which not only signifies one's acceptance of Christ but allows Christ to be manifested within the believer. To "put on Christ" (ἐνδύσασθαι Χριστόν) becomes a metaphor which expresses the spiritual transformation of the believer. As Dunn notes, the subject of the action implied by ἐβαπτίσθητε is God. He writes, "It

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[62] Six proofs (*probationes,* πίστεις) are offered in support of Paul's proposition in 2:15–21. See Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 64–66. Cf. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 160–161.

[63] Ibid., 66.

[64] James D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in relation to Pentecostalism Today*¸ SBT 2/15 (Naperville: Alec R. Allenson Inc., 1970), 109-110.

[65] Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 383.

is God who effects the incorporation into Christ, and he does it by baptizing ἐν πνεύματι, so that entry into the new relationship (καινὴ κτίσις -6:15) is birth κατὰ πνεῦμα (4:29)."[66]

Faith and baptism in Christ also destroy the identity markers of all those who come to Christ. Paul writes in Gal 3:28 that on account of baptism in Christ, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, no male and female" (cf. Rom 10:12; 1 Cor 1:20–22; 12:13). This verse correlates directly to Paul's formulaic antithesis in Gal 6:15 and suggests that appearance is irrelevant to the reality they now live in Christ. Faith and baptism does not replace circumcision as a mere "sign" of the covenant (cf. Gen 17:10–14; Gal 5:6), but it is the manifestation of a new age wherein God deals with humanity according to the Christ-event. The use of the perfect tense of the verb σταυρόω, in Gal 6:14, suggests that Paul's crucifixion with Christ was a past event with ongoing significance. In Gal 6:15 Paul's use of the present tense of εἰμί suggests that the current reality of believers is the καινὴ κτίσις.[67] Yet, Paul does not suggest that "this present evil age" (Gal 1:4) has completely dissipated. Rather, "this age" remains a force which one must continuously be liberated from.

Returning to Paul's fourth proof in Gal 3:26–4:11, Paul says that even though believers are now in Christ there is still a chance a believer could fall away. If the Galatians succumb to circumcision and observe the Law of Moses, then they will revert to their previous slavery to the κόσμος (Gal 4:1–11). In Gal 4:1–2, Paul wants to describe the historical condition of Israel under the Law. Often, Gal 4:1–2 may be oversimplified as a discussion of Greco-Roman

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[66] Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 111–112.

[67] Adams, *Constructing the World*, 227.

guardianship.**68** Though Paul may be alluding to Greco-Roman law, it is also likely that Paul is

considering Palestinian Jewish law of guardianship.**69** Rodrigo Morales observes that if one

understands Gal 4:1–2 as referring to Greco-Roman law, then there are two "glaring

discrepancies" between the application of these verses to Gal 4:3–7. The first discrepancy is the

Father in Gal 4:3–7 is both alive and active, sending his son and adopting others as sons, whereas

the father in Gal 4:1–2 is presumably dead since the minor is under guardians until the date set by

his father in his will.**70** The second discrepancy is when the divine adoption of sons in 4:5 is

compared with Greco-Roman guardianship in Gal 4:2. As Morales notes, Gal 4:3–7 "says

nothing about leaving the status of minority, as Greco-Roman custom would dictate."**71** Taking

the proposal of James M. Scott, Morales suggests that the "heir" of Gal 4:1 is not referring to the

Greco-Roman legal system, but specifically to Israel as Abraham's original (collective) heir.**72**

As a whole, Gal 4:1–2 refers to Israel's historical situation as a νήπιος. In the Jewish

prophetic literature (LXX) Israel can be referred to as a child whenever the text discusses Israel's

lapse into idolatry (e.g. Hos 2; 11; Ezek 16). Though it may be difficult to suggest that Paul is

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68 E.g. Betz, *Galatians*, 202–204; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, SP 9 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 154–155; James D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, BNTC (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1993), 210–211.

69 See James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corupus*, WUNT 2/48 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 128–131. I am grateful for the work of Rodrigo Morales for whose treatment of Gal 4:1–7 I closely follow. See idem., *The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel*, 114–131.

70 Morales, *The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel*, 115–116.

71 Ibid., 116.

72 See Scott, *Adoption as Sons*, 128–129.

directly alluding to these or similar texts in his discussion, it is plausible that these texts constitute a "stock motif describing Israel's history as a period of infancy and slavery to idols, something that the Law failed to remedy."[73] Therefore, Gal 4:1–2 describes Israel under the Law before the coming of Christ.

In Gal 4:3, Paul uses the first-person plural and is emphasized by καὶ ἡμεῖς. This can either be understood as exclusive (Jewish followers of Christ) or inclusive (Jewish and gentile followers of Christ). It seems that Paul's use of "you" in Gal 4:8 is referring to the gentile believers. Therefore, I consider that Paul's use of "we" in 4:3 is in an exclusive sense, namely "we Jewish followers of Christ."[74] So, when Paul speaks of the "elemental spirits of the *world*" (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου) in 4:3, he is referring to Israel's idolatrous history as a νήπιος. The Law of Moses is ineffective in bringing about salvation. Christ has redeemed Jewish followers of Christ from the curse of the Law (cf. Gal 3:13; 4:5), and God has granted them the gift of the Spirit. Yet the gift of the Spirit of God is not exclusive only to Jewish followers of Christ, but to all people who come to the faith. Because Israel has been redeemed from the curse of the Law, gentile followers of Christ also receive the blessing of Abraham through the Spirit. All who are of Christ are Abraham's offspring (εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, Gal 3:29).

After addressing the Jewish followers of Christ in Gal 4:1–6, Paul turns his attention to the gentile followers of Christ in 4:7–11. In this passage, Paul wants to link the gentiles' former

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[73] Morales, *The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel*, 119–121, at 121.

[74] Cf. Matera, *Galatians*, 149.

life to the former life of Jews under the Law. Paul states that the στοιχεῖα are "beings that by nature are not gods." Like the Law, the elemental spirits are weak and impotent. These spirits are ineffectual for salvation, just like the Law is impotent to grant life (cf. Gal 3:21).[75] Therefore to observe the Law of Moses is no different than reverting to the elemental spirits. As several commentators have noted, τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου are the gods they have formerly worshipped.[76] Furthermore, the observance of the Law and worship of the elemental spirits both include calendrical observances.[77] As De Boer observes, "Paul intentionally uses terms that cover both Jewish and pagan calendrical observances for he wants the Galatians to realize that by turning to the Law they are going back to where they came from. The observance of the Law is not a step forward, but a step backward!" (Gal 4:10).

Ultimately, Paul emphasizes that the outpouring of the Spirit ends one's bondage to the Law and to the elemental spirits. Because of the Christ-event, all have been redeemed, Jew and gentile, circumcised and uncircumcised. The Spirit, which has been given to all believers by means of faith and baptism, signs the beginning of the eschatological age – the *new creation*. To glory in the Law or to glory in idolatry is to boast in one's slavery to those things which are neither gods nor grant life. The life, death, and resurrection of Christ, however, grants believers the ability to be free of their slavery to those cosmic forces and live life according to the new

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[75] Martyn, *Galatians*, 412. See also, Martinus C. De Boer, "The Meaning of the Phrase τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου in Galatians," *NTS* 53 (2007): 204–224.

[76] See Betz, *Galatians*, 223–226; Dunn, *Galatians*, 149–150; Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 66.

[77] De Boer, "The Meaning," 216. Cf. Troy W. Martin, "Pagan and Judeo-Christian Time-Keeping Schemes in Galatians 4.10 and Col 2.16," *NTS* (1996): 105–119.

"rule" (κανών – Gal 6:16) of God the Father. Though believers live in the *new creation*, they are not immune to the world.

<div align="center">2 Corinthians 5:11–21</div>

2 Cor 5:17 is the only other text in Pauline literature where the phrase καινὴ κτίσις appears. In this section, I will attempt to show how 2 Cor 5:11–21 calls believers to live in a new reality, apart from sin. This passage is part of Paul's larger argument in favor of his apostolic authority. It is a treatment of the theological, ethical, and spiritual superiority of a life in Christ.[78] 2 Cor 5:11–21 is an exhortation; Paul and the faithful are known by God, and Christ's death and resurrection have brought about death to sin and a new life in Christ. Furthermore, by means of Christ's death and resurrection, God has begun to reconcile the *world* to himself and, therefore, believers should be reconciled to God.

Unlike 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians does not comprehensively link the term κόσμος with notions of sin or death. The term, for the most part, takes on the meaning of the "inhabited world" and has no obvious pejorative connotation.[79] In 2 Cor 7:10, the term κόσμος seems to be associated with "sorrow." Here κόσμος relates to θάνατος and is placed in opposition to God. Paul says, "For the sorrow that is according to God produces an irrevocable salvation; but the sorrow of the *world* produces death" (2 Cor 7:10). It is difficult within this context to ascertain whether Paul understands κόσμος as sinful humanity or in the apocalyptic sense of the sorrow of

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[78] George G. Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 150.

[79] Victor P. Furnish, *II Corinthians: Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary,* AB 32A (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1984)*,* 127.

"this world."[80] I think this question should not overshadow Paul's main point in this verse. Paul suggests that what makes affliction beneficial is how one reacts to it. If one reacts to sorrow in a godly manner, it will produce salvation.[81] That is, if one acts in a manner which is morally excellent it will produce a divine character in the individual that leads to salvation (cf. 1 Pet 1:5–7). But a "worldly" or negative reaction to sorrow will cause irrevocable damage. This damage is a lack of repentance and the inheritance of death.

In 5:17, Paul says that whoever is "in Christ" (ἐν Χριστῷ) is a "new creation" (καινὴ κτίσις). Taking into consideration our discussion of Gal 6:15, *new creation* here should be understood as the renewed created order. There is strong evidence that Paul is taking Isa 43:18 and Isa 65:17 as influential background to 2 Cor 5:17.[82] Although the phrase καινὴ κτίσις does not occur in Isaiah, "new heaven and new earth" (ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινή) in Isa 65:17 conveys the same idea.[83] Paul, by incorporating Isaianic creation theology, suggests that the cosmic destruction of the universe has occurred due to sin (2 Cor 5:19; cf. Isa 24–27, 34–35). But the Christ-event is the long-awaited final event of God's promised renewal of all creation. To say

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[80] Adams, *Constructing the World*, 236.

[81] Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 541.

[82] Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters*, 119–123. For a thorough study of Isaiah motifs in 2 Corinthians see, Mark Gignilliat, *Paul and Isaiah's Servants: Paul's Theological Reading of Isaiah 40–66 in 2 Corinthians 5.14–6.10*, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, 2007). We should note that even though Paul may see Isaiah in the background of his writing, the Corinthian believers may not have understood the full message of Paul's literary technique.

[83] Jackson, *New Creation in Paul's Letters*, 120. Also, G.K. Beale "The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5–7 and its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1," *NTS* 35 (1989): 550–581.

that ἐν Χριστῷ καινὴ κτίσις within this context of destruction and renewal, is to suggest an inaugeration of a new eschatological age.[84]

In 2 Cor 5:18–19 Paul emphasizes what he means by *new creation*. To be part of the *new creation* is for the *world* to be reconciled to God.[85] The term κόσμος also implies the notion of "humanity." God, because of Christ's death and resurrection, is not counting their trespasses against humanity. God, rather, has positive saving actions for humanity. When comparing to Gal 6:14–15 Adams explains how the relationship between κόσμος and καινὴ κτίσις shifts: "In Gal 6:14–15, the cross of Christ announces the birth of the new creation and the *death* of the κόσμος. In 2 Cor 5:17–19, the death of Christ announces the birth of the new creation and the *reconciliation* of the κόσμος."[86]

Christ's death and resurrection significantly changes the course of all human history. Paul says that Christ's death and resurrection served "all" (πᾶς – occurs three times in 5:14–15).[87] Those who are "in Christ" no longer live for themselves but for Christ who died "on their behalf" (ὑπέρ αὐτῶν). To live in the *new creation* is not individualistic but communal. That Christ who died for all has affected the course of human history and his death means "that all have died" (2 Cor 5:14c). Paul, here, is likely drawing on the Adam/Christ antithesis which is most prominent in Rom 5 and 1 Cor 15. He suggests that Christ's death has allowed humanity to die to sin. No

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[84] Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC (Waco: Word Books, 1986), 152. Cf. Gignilliat, *Paul and Isaiah's Servants*, 98.

[85] Beale, "The Old Testament Background," 553.

[86] Adams, *Constructing the World*, 236.

[87] On the universal affect of Christ's death and resurrection see, Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 421–422.

person is excluded from the scope of Christ's redemptive actions, but Christ's redemptive actions are only applicable to those who recognize the salvation offered by God through Christ. This notion will become more apparent in the discussion of *new creation* in Romans.

<p style="text-align:center">Romans 8:18–22</p>

Although the phrase καινὴ κτίσις does not appear in Romans, the concept of *new creation* is a major eschatological point for Paul in Romans 1–8. Interestingly, κτίσις, among the undisputed letters of Paul, is only mentioned in Romans (cf. Col 1:15, 23). In Rom 1–8, the noun κτίσις is used twice in Rom 1 and five times in Rom 8. I agree with the argument of T. Ryan Jackson who suggests that Paul employs creation imagery in Rom 1 and advances his argument towards creation's redemption and renewal in Rom 8.[88] In Romans, Paul argues that creation suffers because of sin, particularly the sin of Adam (Rom 5). Therefore, Paul does not understand the κόσμος as inherently sinful but corrupted, like humanity, on account of sin. Therefore, Paul understands that redemption is not only for humanity but also for all creation. In Romans 8, Paul is building upon an eschatological framework of the "already" and the "not yet." Though he speaks of the Christ-event as the "already," the final redemption of all creation is in the "not yet." He suggests the present suffering of all creation is incomparable to the future glory that is

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[88] Jackson, *New Creation*, 150. Cf. Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994); John Bolt, "The Relation Between Creation and Redemption in Romans 8:8–27," *CTJ* 30 (1995): 34–51.

about to be revealed.[89] In this section, I intend to show how Paul's theology of *new creation* goes beyond humanity and extends to all of God's creation.

The passage in Rom 8:18–22 focuses on the present enslavement and future liberation of all "creation" (κτίσις).[90] Several linguistic arguments have been offered as to how one should understand κτίσις in Rom 8.[91] I agree with the consensus view that κτίσις should be regarded as the "non-human creation." In preparing to speak about *creation*, Paul deliberately evokes traditional Jewish apocalyptic images, while, at the same time, reinterpreting these images for his own purposes.[92] Tobin identifies four apocalyptic motifs which Paul employs.[93] The first is the

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[89] Notice how Paul often connects the suffering of all believers with the passion and death of Christ. See 2 Cor 4:7–14; 6:1–10; 7:3; 13:3–4; Gal 2:19–20; Phil 3:4–11, 20–21; 1 Thess 4:13–18; 5:10. Cf. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 289 n. 34.

[90] I am grateful for the observations of Thomas H. Tobin, whose structuring of Paul's theological argument I follow. See idem., *Paul's Rhetoric*, 289–298.

[91] For a list of possibilities see, Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, SP 6 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 255–256. For a history of research on ἡ κτίσις in Rom 8 see, Olle Christofferson, *The Earnest Expectation of the Creation: The Flood-Tradition as Matrix of Romans 8:18–27*, ConBNT 23 (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1990). Three options for κτίσις have received considerable attention: 1) Κτίσις as the unbelieving human world see, J.G. Gager, "Functional Diversity in Paul's Use of End-Time Language," *JBL* 89 (1970): 327–330; Nikolaus Walter "Gottes Zorn und das 'Harren der Kreatur,' Zur Korrespondenz zwischen Römer 1, 18–32 und 8, 19–22," in *Christus Bezeugen: Festschrift für Wolfgang Trilling zum 65 Geburstag*, ed. T Holtz (Leipzig: St. Benno-Verlag), 219–228; 2) Κτίσις as unbelievers and the non-human creation see, Horst R. Balz, *Heilsvertrauen und Welterfahrung: Strukturen der paulinischen Eschatologie nach Römer 8, 18-39*, BEvT 59 (Munich: Kaiser, 1971); Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 223; 3) Κτίσις as non-human creation see, Brendan Byrne, *"Sons of God – Seed of Abraham:" A Study of the Idea of Sonship of God of all Christians in Paul Against the Jewish Background*, AnBib 83 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979); Christofferson, *The Earnest Expectation*, 139; most modern commentaries. Cf. Adams, *Constructing the World*, 176.

[92] Dunn, *Romans*, 467; Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric, 289–290.*

[93] Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 289–290.

contrast between present suffering and future glory (2 Cor 4:17; cf. 1 Pet 4:13; 5:10).[94] The second

is the connection between the fate of humanity and *creation*, which can be connected either with

the fate of Adam (Gen 3:17–19; 5:29) or with the creation of a *new heaven and a new earth* (Isa

65:17; 66:22). The common theme in this apocalyptic framework is that the non-human κτίσις is

intrinsically linked to the situation of humanity, and God will bring about their renewal in some

future time.[95] The third motif is the notion that increased suffering and distress on a cosmic level

will precede the final consummation of the world.[96] The final motif is the apocalyptic use of the

birth pangs of a woman in labor.[97]

Paul revises these motifs to serve his own argument. One overarching way Paul

reincorporates these themes in Romans is by placing them within an inclusive framework, which

includes not only the children of Israel but all of humanity. As Tobin notes, Jewish apocalyptic

literature often pitted the Jewish people as a whole or the righteous among them, against the

unrighteous who could either be gentiles or unrighteous Jews. Regarding Rom 8:19–22 Tobin

observes,

> the 'sons of God' (8:19) and the 'children of God' (8:21) are not set over against any other
> group or groups of human beings from which they will be delivered or against which they

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[94] Dan 7:17–27; Wis 2–5; 2 Macc 7; 1 En. 102–104; 2 Bar. 15:8.

[95] On the relationship between Adam and creation see, Jub. 4:26; 2 Bar. 56:5–7; 4 Ezra 7:10–15.

[96] Dan 7:21–22, 25–27; 12:1–3; 4 Ezra 5:1–13; 6:13–24; 9:1–3; 2 Bar. 25:2–3; 48:30–41; 70:2–10; Sib. Or. 1:62–65; 2:154–173; 3:632–656, 796–806.

[97] Ps 48:6; Isa 13:8; 26:16–17; 66:7–8; Jer 4:31; 1 En. 62:4; 4 Ezra 10:6–16; 1QHᵃ 3:7–18; Cf. 1 Thess 5:3. On Jewish apocalyptic literature see, Edward Adams, *The Stars Will Fall from Heaven: Cosmic Catastrophe in the New Testament and Its World*, LNTS 347 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 52–100.

will be vindicated. Rather, they will be freed from 'slavery to decay; (τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς) into the freedom of the glory of the children of God (8:21).[98]

For Paul, God's salvation is made available to all humanity. The salvation offered by God vindicates not only humanity but all creation from the cosmic forces of death and decay.

In Paul's eschatological point of view in Rom 8:18–22, Paul describes that the suffering of all creation, a suffering with Christ, will lead to being glorified with Christ. The Christ-event has cosmic implications. Paul states that the κτίσις has been made subject to "futility" (ματαιότης). The noun ματαιότης, as Dunn states, has the sense of uselessness "of an object which does not function as it was designed to do … or, more precisely, which has been given a role for which it was not designed and which is unreal or illusory" (cf. Rom 1:21).[99] Κτίσις has become subjected to sin and is held in "bondage to decay" (τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς). Creation is not permenantly corrupt, as seen in 1 Corinthians, but its enslavement to decay has been imposed upon it (Rom 8:20). Notice how the fate of humanity is linked to the fate of *creation*. On account of sin, both creation and humanity are in bondage to death and decay. Yet the freedom which is applied to the "children of God" will be applied to *creation*. Creation itself (αὐτὴ ἡ κτίσις) is the subject of the passive verb ἐλευθερωθήσεται; creation will be liberated (Rom 8:21).[100]

Summary

The passage in Rom 8:18–22, when taken into consideration with Gal 6:15 and 2 Cor 5:17, illustrates several points about Paul's understanding of καινὴ κτίσις. First *new creation* comes

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[98] Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 291.

[99] Dunn, *Romans*, 470.

[100] Jackson, *New Creation*, 162.

from an established motif in Jewish apocalyptic literature. Paul revises this motif to illustrate how the Christ-event has brought an eschatological fulfillment to several prophecies from Jewish literature, including several Isaianic prophecies of a "new heaven and a new earth" (Isa 49:8; 65:17, 22). Second, *new creation* is crucial to the life of a follower of Christ. As it will be seen more clearly in the following section, *new creation* promises an epistemological change of all Christ believers. Those "in Adam" remain within the old fading creation; a place of the "flesh" where sin, death, and decay are sovereign. Those "in Christ" enter the *new creation*; a place where one walks by the Spirit in hope of a final resurrection from the dead. Third, Christ believers stand in contrast to sin. In 1 Corinthians and Galatians, believers stand in contrast to the κόσμος which is described as the arena of sin and death. In Romans, however, all creation stands in opposition to their cosmic captor *who* is death and decay. Finally, Christ by his passion, death, and resurrection has inaugurated the *new creation* which will be fully manifested at the eschaton. As seen in Rom 8:18–22, the redemption promised to creation has begun but all creation eagerly awaits the final redemption of the "children of God." This is the "hope" for all who were saved by Christ, but they must wait "with patience" until the consummation of time.

The New Reality in Christ and the Place of Rome in the Καινὴ Κτίσις

Paul's response to sin and death is his theology of καινὴ κτίσις ("new creation"). *New creation* becomes a motif which acknowledges that, on account of the Christ-event, the "old way" of life has ended and this has resulted in a "new way" of life, a new reality. This "new way" of life can be explained using Paul's eschatological-soteriological understanding of *new creation*. Paul seeks to establish a common ethic among his communities to suggest that they now exist as a

new reality. The κόσμος is corrupt/has been corrupted and, therefore, believers must remain

distinct. They must live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

In his ethical discourses, Paul says that this new reality, this *new creation*, is a liberation

from the old life. Furthermore, it is a liberation from non-human enemies, the cosmic forces of

sin, death, and decay. Though the Roman Empire is never explicitly mentioned, all things within

the old age will ultimately fade away. Creation will be renewed (Rom 8:18–30) and those in

Christ will receive the resurrection from the dead (Rom 6:5; 7:4–6; 8:11. 18–25; 1 Cor 6:13–14;

15:20–28, 35–58 2 Cor 4:13–14; 5:1–5; Gal 6:78; 1 Thess 4:13–18; 5:23). In this section I will

explore Paul's ethical exhortations relating to his exhortations of living in a new reality,

emphasized by his *new creation* theology. Then, I will describe the likely place of the Roman

Empire in Paul's eschatological soteriology. With regard to the Roman Empire, I will attempt to

show that it does not play a significant role in Paul eschatological soteriology. The Roman

Empire, like every other entity both political and otherwise which are not in Christ, will

ultimately pass away (1 Cor 7:31). All that will remain is the new creation in Christ.

<div align="center">A New Reality in Christ</div>

Paul seeks to establish a common "Christian" ethic among his communities. Though the

Pauline assemblies varied in location and in their societal interactions with non-Christ believers,

Paul, nonetheless, wanted to instill an ethic focused on the gospel which he preached. Paul

suggested that a life in Christ meant a believer lived in a new reality. In this reality, they were

not only filled with God's Spirit but also lived a life which was pleasing to God. Paul sought to

create a translocal ethical link among his communities which is emphasized by his Spirit filled

language. He wanted to guide believers to live a life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

In his commentary on 1 Thessalonians, Charles Wanamaker suggests that Paul's primary goal was to preach the gospel in order to create followers of Christ, while simultaneously building a community of believers. Wanamaker says that, "without a community to reinforce the new beliefs and values and to encourage proper Christian behavior and practice, it is unlikely that Paul's converts would have survived as Christians."[101] As previously noted, Wayne Meeks suggested that Paul's assemblies differed from their Greco-Roman counterparts because their translocal activities, particularly emphasizing an imposition of a universal hierarchical structure.[102] Richard Ascough rightly argued against Meeks by documenting translocal links between voluntary associations and dismissing claims of Pauline hierarchy among the assemblies of Christ believers.[103] But, as Young-Ho Park observes, though Paul does not impose a unified structure on his assemblies he does seek to establish a shared ethic and practices among them.[104]

In 1 Corinthians 11:16, Paul seems to be encouraging a *translocal standard*, with regard to Christian ethical practices, among his assemblies.[105] Though, in the larger passage of 1 Cor 11: 2-16, when Paul is discussing head coverings, he says that there is no need for contention about such practices because "we have no such *custom* (συνήθεια), nor do the churches (ἐκκλησίαι) of

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[101] Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 15.

[102] Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul,* 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 79

[103] Richard S. Ascough, "Translocal Relationships among Voluntary Associations and Early Christianity," *JECS* 5 (1997): 223-241, at 228-234

[104] Young-Ho Park, *Paul's Ekklesia as a Civic Assembly: Understanding the People of God in their Politico-Social World*, WUNT 2/393 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 115-116.

[105] Ibid., 115.

God" (1 Cor 11:6b; cf. 1 Cor 8:7).[106] Park pays particular attention to the term συνήθεια within the

larger context saying:

> It was not an *a priori* fixed regulation; nor was behavior in worship entrusted to a local congregation's disposal. This dynamic shows the dialectical nature of formulating communal ethos. Each community's reception of its organizational principle of "the whole church." The concept of the universal church, however, was still not yet apparent in Paul's writing. It was rather a network of the multiple ἐκκλησίαι. A Pattern of behavior became a custom not through imposition from the center but by unanimous acceptance by the majority of the local congregations.[107]

Paul understood his communities as a translocal phenomenon, unified by the gospel of

Christ. Park suggests that common ethical principles united Paul's assemblies, but Park does not

describe what that ethic or uniting principle was. Though Paul was not trying to develop a

singular ethical system among his communities, he did encourage them to live in a particular

manner which was reflective of their having faith and receiving the Holy Spirit.[108] As Gordon

Fee suggests, the empowering of the Spirit is crucial to an understanding of Pauline ethics.[109] In

this section, I will not attempt to describe Paul's *pneumatology*, the role of the Spirit in each of

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[106] The larger pericope in 1 Cor 11:2-16 is one of the more debated Pauline passages. For a discussion on the topic see, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroads, 1983), 227-228; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 258-259; Victor Paul Furnish, *The Theology of the First Letter to the Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 77; Troy W. Martin, "Paul's Argument From Nature For the Veil in 1 Corinthians 11:13-15: A Testicle Instead of a Head Covering," *JBL 123* (2004): 75-84.

[107] Park, *Paul's Ekklesia* as Civic Assembly, 115.

[108] Paul does not use the Spirit to speak only about ethical teachings. On the complexity of Paul's use of πνεῦμα see, e.g., Gary T. Cage, *The Holy Spirit: A Sourcebook with Commentary* (Reno: Charlotte House Publishers, 1995), especially 494. Also, John Levinson, *Filled with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009).

[109] Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 878. Similarly, Volker Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul: Transformation and Empowering for Religious-Ethical Life*, 2ed (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 20.

his letters, or how a believer receives the Spirit.[110] Rather, I am seeking to illustrate how Paul's theology of faith, Spirit, transformation, and sanctification encourages a common ethic among the assemblies he was writing to. Though all of these elements are not equally emphasized across his letters, Paul did encourage a new way of life by means of his ethical exhortations. This shared ethic becomes a translocal link among the assemblies of Christ believers.[111]

Scholars widely regard 1 Thessalonians as Paul's earliest extant letter, written sometime around 50 CE.[112] In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, one reads that the Holy Spirit, which is given to the believer, calls the believer to a life of holiness: "For God has not called us for the purpose of uncleanliness (ἀκαθαρσία), but in holiness (ἐν ἁγιασμῷ). Consequently, the one who rejects [these things] is not rejecting man, but God the one who indeed gives you his Holy Spirit (τὸν θεὸν τὸν [καὶ] διδόντα τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ τὸ ἅγιον εἰς ὑμᾶς)" (1 Thess 4:7-8). These verses

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[110] The most extensive study on Pauline pneumatology was undertaken by Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*. Also see, Friedrich Wilhelm Horn, "Wandel im Geist: zur pneumatologischen Begründung der Ethik bei Paulus," *KD* 38 (1992): 149-170; James D.G. Dunn, "Towards the Spirit of Christ: The Emergence of Distinctive Features of Christian Pneumatology," in *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*, ed. M. Welker (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 3-26. On Pauline ethics and the Spirit, e.g. see, Eckhard J. Schnabel, "How Paul Developed His Ethics," in *Understanding Paul's Ethics: Twentieth-Century Approaches*, ed. Brian S. Rosner (Exeter; Paternoster Press, 1995), 167-197; André Munzinger, *Discerning the Spirits: Theological and Ethical Hermeneutics in Paul*, SNTSMS 140 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[111] The section will discuss each of Paul's letters in chronological order, following consensus dating: 1 Thess; Gal; 1 Cor; Phil; Phlm; 2 Cor; Rom. For a discussion regarding Pauline chronology, and authorship of the New Testament letters see, Stanley E. Porter, *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters* (Grand Rapids.: William B. Eerdmans, 2016).

[112] Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonian*, AB 32B (New York: Yale Doubleday, 2000), 13. M. Eugene Boring notes that we should not understand Paul's theology in his letters as progressing. Rather, Paul's theology "changed over the years, but this is a matter of adapting and rethinking his core convictions under the pressure of new situations, not an evolutionary development from primitive to sophisticated." See, Boring, *I & II Thessalonians: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 9.

end the larger pericope concerning instructions on sexual morality (1 Thess 4:3-8). Ultimately, Paul's logic in this passage is that his ethical instructions are not his, but come from God. Paul is merely God's agent. Therefore, to reject this call to holiness is a rejection of God.[113]

One notices here and elsewhere in the letter, that it is the indwelling of the Spirit which grants the believer the ability to become holy; "For you also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with joy of the Holy Spirit (πνεύματος ἁγίου)" (1 Thess 1:6; Also see, 1 Thess 1:5 [πνεύμα ἁγίῳ]). For the Thessalonian believers, to possess the Spirit is a call to *sanctification* (cf. 1 Thess 4:3, 4, 7; ἁγιασμός). To avoid *uncleanliness* is a call to *sanctification*, both concerns of an ethical life.[114] The believers, possessed by the Holy Spirit, are now enabled to live sanctified lives. To be sanctified (ἁγιάζω) does not mean a separation from the world, but to live a distinct life within the world.[115] A similar way of life is encouraged in the letter to the Galatians.

Paul's letter to the Galatians, written sometime between 50-55 CE, [116] describes a Spirit and flesh (σάρξ) dichotomy directly associated with both virtues and vices (Gal 5:1-6:10). Paul's moral exhortation in Gal 5:16-25 is quite straightforward. This passage, general in its ethical

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[113] Wanamaker, *The Epistle to the Thessalonians*, 157-158.

[114] Boring, *I & II Thessalonians*, 141.

[115] Ibid., 142. Cf. 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11.

[116] Hans Dieter Betz argues that chronologically dating Galatians among the other undisputed letters is difficult, since there is little evidence to go on. Theological positions do shift between Romans and Galatians, suggesting that Galatians was written sometime before Romans. An earlier date for the letter is often proposed and accepted by most scholars. See, Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 11-12. Cf. Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC 41 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), lxxii-lxxvii.

exhortation, suggests that he was not addressing a specific issue in the community. He was giving the Galatian believers a general rule to live their lives. This passage also helps us understand how Paul conceives of an ethical life apart from the Mosaic Law.[117]

In Gal 2:19-20, Paul suggests that he has "died to the Law," so that he may live in God. To live for God is how Paul conceptualizes the life of a believer.[118] Paul associates the flesh with a sinful reality which is opposed to God (e.g., Gal 2:17; 3:3, 22; 4:23, 29; 5:13, 16, 17, 24; 6:8). This life in the flesh is also associated with observance of the Law of Moses (e.g. Gal 3:3). The Spirit, however, is vigorously opposed to the flesh (e.g., 3:3; 4:29; 5:16; 17 [twice]; 6:8 [twice]). This dichotomy is exemplified in the moral exhortation in Gal 5:16-25. If the Galatian believers "walk" by the Spirit, are "led" by the Spirit, and "live" by the Spirit, the Spirit will produce virtues in them (Gal 5:22-23).[119] But if they "gratify the desires of the flesh (σάρξ)," desires he lists in Gal 5:19-21, "they will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:21). To live in the Spirit is to live a life in Christ. The more the believer adheres to a life in the Spirit, the more Christ is "formed" within them (Gal 4:19; μορφόω).[120]

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, written in the spring between 53-55 CE,[121] again makes use of the Spirit/flesh dichotomy as seen in Galatians. In 1 Cor 2:10-16, Paul tells the

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[117] Cf. Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric*, 67.

[118] "To live in God" as a concept is also found in Romans 6:10, 11, (with the addition of " … in Christ Jesus). This concept is opposed to "live for oneself" (ζῆν ἑαυτῷ), cf. Romans 14:7; 2 Cor 5:15. See Betz, *Galatians*, 122, 122 n.82.

[119] Matera, *Galatians*, 205.

[120] Raben, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 173.

[121] On the dating of this letter see e.g., Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 15. The unity of the letter has been questioned as well, arguing that 1-2 Corinthians are composites of multiple letters Paul

Corinthian believers that they have all received the Spirit from God so that they may be able to understand the gifts of God which were given to them (1 Cor 2:12). The Spirit of God is contrary to the "spirit of the world" (πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου) because it is only the Spirit of God which reveals things which are beyond the limits of human knowledge.[122] The Spirit of God relates divine knowledge, only accessible by means of the Christ's death and resurrection (1 Cor 2:8, 16). Anthony C. Thiselton observes,

> the logic of Paul's thought is that if, by analogy, one person cannot know the least accessible aspects of another human being unless that person is willing to place them in the public domain, even so we cannot expect that God's own thoughts, God's own purposes, God's own qualities, or God's own self could be open to scrutiny unless his spirit makes them accessible by an act of unveiling them.[123]

Paul teaches that revelation not only derives from the Spirit, but also that revelation is granted to the believer on account of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:11). [124] The Spirit, therefore, reveals the mystery of God "since only the Spirit has connatural knowledge of God."[125] But if you should still be living a "fleshly" (1 Cor 3:3; σαρκικός) life, you either have not received the Spirit or you have Spirit but continue to act contrarily to the Spirit.[126]

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had written to the community. See e.g., Murphey O'Conner, *Paul*, 255; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 54-55; Hans Dieter Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 3-36.

[122] David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 99.

[123] Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 258-259.

[124] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 132. Cf. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 259-264,

[125] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 133.

[126] Cf. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 110.

Regarding ethics and a way of life, what does the Spirit reveal? Paul says that the "unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9a; ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν). He then lists vices which the Corinthian believers should avoid (1 Cor 9b-10), and reiterates that those who commit such deeds will not "inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:10; βασιλείαν θεοῦ κληρονομήσουσιν).[127] It is important to notice Paul's use of the imperfect indicative form of εἰμί (ἦτε) in 1 Cor 6:11, indicating that Corinthian believers were once involved in these acts of debauchery: "this is what you used to be" (1 Cor. 6:11a; καὶ ταῦτά τινες ἦτε). It is a reference to a "continuous habituation" by the Corinthians.[128] "But (ἀλλά)", says Paul, "you were washed, you were sanctified (ἡγιάσθητε [cf. 1 Cor 1:2, 30]), you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:11b). Paul indicates that the Corinthian believers should no longer engage in such actions because they have undergone a great spiritual transformation of conversion (cf. 1 Cor 12:13).[129] Now that the believers are sanctified by Christ and in the Spirit of God, they must live a life in accordance to their new identity. Similar to his lament against the Galatians (see, Gal 3), Paul emphasizes that, by means of the Spirit, they are now one body in Christ sharing in this common experience of a new reality (1 Cor 12:12, 27; cf. Gal 4:19).[130] To live in this new reality is to live according to the

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[127] Notice the language about the "kingdom of God" and vice lists is strikingly similar to the language of Galatians 5:19-21.

[128] Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 453.

[129] James D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today*, SBT 2 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 121. Similarly, Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 604 n.24.

[130] Cf. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 103.

gospel of Christ (1 Cor 15:1-2), in order to obtain salvation (1 Cor 15:2), the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9, 10; 15:24, 50), and the resurrection from the dead (1 Cor 15:12-23).

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, written sometime during his imprisonment in the mid-50s CE,[131] there is a strong call to unity by means of the "Spirit."[132] Paul says that the Philippian believers are to "only conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Μόνον ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε), and that they are to "stand firm in one Spirit" (στήκετε ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι) (Phil 1:27). In this verse, Paul is singling out several intimate relationships which highlight the Philippian believers' practice of an ethical life, practices which are *worthy* of the gospel of Christ.

 In Phil 2:1, Paul mentions the κοινωνία πνεύματος ("fellowship in the Spirit") as one of the relational factors to live in a manner worthy of the gospel.[133] The mention of the Spirit in Phil 2:1, is a calling back to the "one Spirit" in Phil 1:27.[134] In and by the Spirit, the Philippian believers are united to Christ, and in Christ to one another, as well as to Paul.[135] Being united in the one Spirit, they are then required to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil 1:27). In his encouragement to the believers, Paul calls them to imitate him so that they may

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[131] On the debates surrounding the provenance of Paul's letter to the Philippians, see, Bonnie B. Thurston and Judith M. Ryan, *Philippians and Philemon*, SP 10, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 28-30; Gordon Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995);

[132] Cf. Frederick F. Bruce, *Philippians* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 19.

[133] Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in* Paul, 240.

[134] Gordon Fee, *Philippians* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1999), 84-85; Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 181.

[135] Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 182.

avoid false teachers (Phil 3:17) and they may exhibit behavior which will *physically* change their

bodies (Phil 3:19-21: μετασχηματίζω). Their destiny is to live with Christ "in heaven," and they

need to reflect this new reality while they "await" the savior (Phil 3:20). This new reality is also

emphasized in Paul's letter to Philemon, but in an unpronounced way.

The letter to Philemon, possibly written in the mid-50s CE,[136] is unique among Paul's

letters. The letter is personally written to Philemon, but also to the ἐκκλησία which gathers in his

house regarding Philemon's runaway slave, Onesimus.[137] Though the letter's intention is a

personal matter for Philemon, Paul's specific mention of Apphia, Archippus, and the assembly

make it a public discourse as well. In this letter of only twenty-five verses, the Spirit of God is

never mentioned or alluded to[138] Yet, Paul uses Philemon's faith in Christ as an example of

ethical living. Paul says,

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[136] The date of this letter often depends on where one places Paul with regards to his imprisonment. Those who argue Paul wrote the letter during his imprisonment in Ephesus will date the letter to 55 CE. Those who accept the tradition of Acts 23:33-27:2 date the letter to 58 CE during his imprisonment in Caesarea. The traditional dating from Rome places the letter around 61 CE. See, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Letter to Philemon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 34C (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 9-10; Richard R. Melick, Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, NAC 32 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), 139-140; Daniel L. Migliore, *Philippians and Romans* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 190-192.

[137] The identity of Onesimus is debated. Allen Dwight Callaghan, *Embassy of Onesimus: The Letter of Paul to Philemon* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1997), 44-54, identifies Onesimus as the estranged brother of Philemon; his theory is unpersuasive; James L. Houlden, *Paul's Letters From Prison* (London: SCM, 1970), 226, contests that Philemon sent Onesimus to Paul on an errand, and while with Paul converted proving himself helpful to Paul. Cf. Wendy Cotter, ""Welcome Him as you would Welcome Me" (Philemon 17): Does Paul Call for Virtue or the Actualization of a Vision?" in *From Judaism to Christianity – Tradition and Transition: A Festschrift for Thomas H. Tobin S.J., on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 185-206. Also see, Murphey O'Conner, *Paul*, 176-179.

[138] See, Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 636.

> That the fellowship of your faith may become effectual in the acknowledgment of every good that is ours in Christ. For I have great joy and consolation from your love, because the hearts of the holy ones have been refreshed on account of you, brother (Phlm 6-7).

Though Paul does not specifically detail Philemon's faithful actions, he does suggest that his "acknowledgment of every good" is on account of Christ, which gives "consolation" (παράκλησις) to Paul. Furthermore, Philemon's faith and actions (cf. Phlm 7; ἀναπέπαυται) lifted the moral of other believers. Paul uses the term σπλάγχνον, translated as "bowels" which identifies the seat of all emotions in ancient world, to recognize the great effect Philemon had on the believers.[139] In a sense, the public character of this letter not only praises Philemon for his faith and actions, but encourages other believers to follow his example.

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, likely a composite of two or more letters dating from 55-56 CE,[140] he emphasizes that the Spirit enables the believer to live a religiously ethical life by means of an intimate encounter with God in Christ (2 Cor 3:1-18). This encounter allows the believer to be transformed into the likeness of Christ (2 Cor 3:18).[141] Second Corinthians 3:7-3:18 can be divided into two parts: In 3:1-11, Paul appeals to the story of Moses whose face was veiled after descending from Sinai (Exod 34:29-30) to support his gospel, the new covenant, as

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[139] Helmut Koester, "σπλάγχνον," *TDNT* 7:555. Notice that σπλάγχνα is parallel to καρδία. As Koester notes, "The word … is used for the whole person which in the depths of its emotional life has experienced refreshment through the consolation of love." This is the meaning which Paul uses in Phlm 7. Idem., 7. 555. Also, Melick, *Philippians, Colossian, Philemon*, 356.

[140] Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 54-55. For a more detailed discussion see, Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 30-48.

[141] I am indebted to the work of Volker Rabens for his exegesis on 2 Cor 3:18. See, Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 174-203.

superior to the old, fading, covenant;[142] in 3:12-18 Paul considers the "veil" covering Moses's

face in Exod 34:29-35 in order to contrast the *veiled* ministry of Moses to the *unveiled* ministry of

Christ (2 Cor 3:13, 14, 15, 18).[143] This larger passage is preceded by a verse which indicates that

the Spirit of God gives life, while the written (Mosaic) Law "kills" (ἀποκτείνω) (2 Cor 3:6).

In 2 Cor 3:7-11, Paul infers that the new covenant which is *written* by the Spirit of God,

far exceeds the Mosaic Law which is *carved in stone* (2 Cor 3:7; ἐντυπόω). It is the Spirit which

reveals the greater glory of God, much greater than that revealed in the written Law (2 Cor 3:8).

The written Law brings death, while the Spirit gives life (cf. 2 Coe 3:17). Moses, while on the

mountain, only saw a portion of God's glory because no one could see God and live (see, Exod

33:20). The new covenant, however, reveals the fullness of God's glory without killing, because

it leads to an internalized revelation. The new covenant brings about an internal transformation

(e.g. 2 Cor 3:3; 4:6, 16-18), as opposed to Moses's external revelation. [144]

Then, in 2 Cor 3:12-18, Paul shifts to the function of the Spirit in the lives of believers.

Craig S. Keener comments,

> … the glory of the first covenant was limited, transient, and deadly, those who "turn to the Lord" receive the Spirit, hence the glory of the internalized, new covenant law (3:3, 6-11, 16-17). For them the veil is removed, as it was for Moses when he was before the Lord (3:16). All those on whose hearts the Spirit inscribes the new covenant message are *transformed* to keep God's covenant, as they continue to behold God's glory and know God (cf. 3:3; Jer 31:32-34).[145]

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[142] Furnish, *II Corinthian*, 225.

[143] George H. Guthrie, *2 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 217.

[144] Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 168.

[145] Ibid., 169. Emphasis mine.

The emphasis for Paul seems to be an internalized transformation of the believer which, consequently, has ethical ramifications. Paul says, "But all of us, with unveiled faces, gazing at the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are transformed into the same image from [one degree of] glory into [another degree of] glory (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν), just as from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18).[146] This transformation likely refers to the "life and death" of Christ which is now made manifest in them (2 Cor 4:7-15).[147] This manifestation of Christ is a notion which focuses heavily on the believers' Christ-like behavior, and this Christ-like behavior then becomes visible to the world (cf. 2 Cor 4:6-7).[148] Just as Paul was empowered by this transformation to preach the gospel and live according to the new covenant of God in Christ (2 Cor 4:1), so too are the Corinthian believers called to live in this new reality: "but we have renounced the hidden things of shame; neither walking in craftiness nor adulterating the word of God, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor 4:2; cf. 2 Cor 3:3, 18; 4:1).[149]

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[146] Cf. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 313-319.

[147] Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul, 193.*

[148] Ibid. Also, Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 316.

[149] Rabens, *The Holy Spirit and Ethics in Paul*, 199.

Paul's letter to the Romans, likely written in 57-58 CE,[150] contains the second largest

amount of Spirit material among the undisputed Pauline letters.[151] The noun "spirit" (πνεῦμα)

appears thirty-one times and the adjective "spiritual" (πνευματικός) appears an additional three

times.[152] But it is interesting to note that in Rom 5-7, where Paul is most concerned with the

ethical behavior of the Roman believers, the Holy Spirit plays a minor role.[153] Before

commenting on Rom 5-7, I think it necessary to make a few remarks regarding the *Spirit of God*

in this letter. Though this section is not concerned with Pauline pneumatology, it is beneficial to

make a few remarks contextualizing this letter.

I think Thomas H. Tobin is correct when he observes that Paul's ethical exhortation relies

neither on the Mosaic Law nor to one's conformation to the world. It is due, however, "to the

transformation of their minds that is rooted in the newness of life through the baptism they all

share."[154] Paul contrasts the Holy Spirit as that which gives life, against the flesh (σάρξ) which is

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[150] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 87. Similarly, Joseph B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 40,43. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 2-5, suggests that Paul could have written Romans any time between 55 and 58 CE.

[151] First Corinthians contains the most Spirit material. See, Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 472.

[152] See, Ibid., 472 n.2.For instances of "Spirit" (πνεῦμα) see, Rom 1:4, 9; 2:29; 5:5; 7:6; 8:2, 4, 5 [twice], 6, 9 [thrice], 10, 11 [twice], 143, 14, 15 [twice], 16 [twice], 23, 26 [twice], 27; 9:1; 12:11; 14:17; 15:13, 16, 19, 30. In Rom 8:1, variant manuscripts also contain the term "Spirit." For instances of "spiritual" (πνευματικός) see, 1:11; 7:14; 15:27.

[153] Notice that the Holy Spirit is either described as the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Christ; e.g., Rom 8:2, 9 (Spirit of Christ); Rom 8:14 (Spirit of God).

[154] Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Context*, 389. Cf. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 634, who suggests that the Holy Spirit is central to Paul's ethical exhortations in Roman.

the source of sin and death (Rom 8:1-17). There is a striking difference between Paul's

understanding of Spirit in Galatians when compared to Romans. In Galatians, on the one hand,

the Spirit frees the believer from bondage to the Law of Moses and guides the believers in their

ethical behavior (Gal 5:1-21). On the other hand, the Spirit in Romans is no longer opposed to the

Law of Moses, and the Spirit itself becomes its own type of "law" (Rom 8:2). The Spirit frees

from sin and death, instead of freedom from bondage to the Mosaic Law (Rom 6-7; cf. Gal 4:1-7,

8-11). One of Paul's intentions in writing to the Christ followers in Rome is to dispel any

misgivings about him or the gospel he preaches, and, it seems, there was some backlash to Paul's

theology as expressed in 1 Corinthians and Galatians. [155]

Nonetheless, when Paul begins his ethical exhortation in Rom 5, he emphasizes that both

he and the Roman believers were justified by faith in God through Christ (Rom 5:1).[156] Because

of this righteousness, they now stand "in grace" which has ethical consequences (Rom 5:2a).

Paul emphasizes that the Mosaic Law no longer brings righteousness, because of their

justification by faith in/of Christ (Rom 4:24-25). Therefore, a virtuous life is one where

righteousness is connected to both "faith" and to "this grace in which we stand." Paul, on

account of both faith and grace, boasts in the practice of three virtues: character, patience, and

hope (Rom 5:4).[157] It is important to note that Paul places the practice of these three virtues in the

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[155] For a more detailed discussion on these misgivings, as well as differences between Paul's pneumatology in Galatians when compared to Romans, see Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Context*, 155-158, 273-288.

[156] Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 393.

[157] Tobin notes that Paul is drawing on his ethical material from his earlier letters. See, Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Context*, 159. Also, James D.G. Dunn, *Romans*, WBC 38A-B (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 251-252

context of "affliction" (θλῖψις) (Rom 5:3). Paul highlights the relationship between affliction and the virtues, using the rhetorical figure of κλῖμαξ or *gradatio*.[158] In this way, Paul is emphasizing the relationship between the virtues, namely, that affliction produces character, character produces patience, and patience produces hope. Though the present situation of the Roman followers of Christ may be burdensome, Paul reassures them that their lives in Christ are only strengthened, "because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which is given to us" (Rom 5:5b). To live in faith and grace is to know the reality, faithfulness, and presence of God's love.[159]

This section has set out to show how Paul sought to create a translocal ethic among the assemblies he wrote to. He wanted to establish a shared ethic centered on the gospel of Christ, namely that life in Christ meant they lived in a new reality. In this new reality, they are filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered to live a life acceptable to God by means of their new faith. In the letters, Paul employs language of sanctification, and "transformation" over and against "conforming" to the world (e.g., 1 Thess 4:3-8; 1 Cor 6:11; 12:13; Phil 3:19-21). Paul also uses Spirit filled language to suggest that it is the Holy Spirit that which guides believers to live a moral and ethical life (e.g., 1 Thess 4:3-8; Gal 5:1-6). Or he may use language of faith and grace as ethical principles which should guide the believer in the practice of virtue instead of vice (Phlm 6-7: Rom 5-7).

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[158] This rhetorical figure is a progressive elaboration of a reduplication, *anadiplosis*: /…x/x…y/y…z. See, Quintilian, *Inst*. 9.3.54; 9.4.34; Demetrius, *Eloc*. 270. Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric*, 159.

[159] Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 208.

The Place of the Empire in God's *New Creation*

As emphasized throughout this chapter, Paul's enemies are not human. Though Paul is often arguing against agitators in his community, he is arguing not against them but against the forces which they are enslaved to. In Galatians, Paul is arguing against the Law of Moses which once enslaved Jews just like the elements, which are not gods, that once enslaved the gentiles (Gal 4:1–11). Likewise, in Romans 8, Paul suggests that all creation is in bondage not to any human force but to the cosmic forces of death and decay. The place of Rome in Paul's eschatological soteriology is more nuanced than what some may claim. Looking at the passage in 1 Cor 15, one will be more able to assess not only the place of Rome in Paul's theology but the place of all entities which are not in Christ.

The passage in 1 Cor 15 develops a theme which Paul has been incorporating into the entire letter, namely, the contrast between this *world*/age and the new age. For example, in 1 Cor 1:18–25 Paul divides humanity into two categories, the "saved" (σῳζόμενοι) and the "perishing" (ἀπολλύμενοι). This passage emphasizes that those who are being saved are being rescued from this κόσμος which will eventually fade away (cf. 1 Cor 15:24).[160] Those who are being saved are those "in Christ" (cf. 1 Cor 15:18). Those who are perishing are those who are not in Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15:22).

The final hope of all those who are in Christ, all those who live in the *new creation*, is resurrection from the dead. The passage in 1 Cor 15:20–28 emphasizes Paul's insider/outsider language by explaining how the Christ-event has implications for those who have died in Christ (cf. Rom 6:1–11; 7:4–6; 2 Cor 5:14–21; Gal 2:19–20; 5:24–25; 6:14–16; Phil 3:8–11; 1 Thess 4:13-

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[160] Adams, *Constructing the World*, 144.

18).[161] In 1 Cor 15:23–24, Paul gives a scenario of events that have begun with the Christ-event

and explains the eschatological (future) implications of this event. Paul writes,

> But each one in his own order; Christ the first-fruits (ἀπαρχή), then those who belong to Christ at his *Parousia*, then the end (τέλος), when he shall handover the kingdom to the God and Father, when he shall destroy every principality (ἀρχή), and every authority (ἐξουσία), and every power (δύναμις) (1 Cor 15:24–25).

The *end* is defined as the moment when Christ will hand over the kingdom to the Father. The *end*

is understood to be the culmination of Christ's destruction of every principality, authority, and

power. Paul emphasizes this point by citation of Ps 110:1b (= LXX Ps 109:1b) in 1 Cor 15:25.[162]

The principalities and powers are enemies and their destruction is identified by the subjugation

as placement (τίθημι) under the feet of Christ (ὑπο τοὺς πόδας). Death (θάνατος) is the final

enemy (1 Cor 15:26). Death is destroyed but has not been completely destroyed, hence the

difficulty in translating the present passive καταργεῖται. It is both an enemy (ἐχθρός) and the

"last sequentially" to be overcome."[163]

There are a number of passages in the Pauline and non-Pauline epistles where several

"powers" are listed.[164] In every case where these "powers" are listed together, Paul has in mind

those cosmic forces which are both subordinate to God and to his Christ. But what makes these

forces "powers" is their ability to intervene between God and God's creation, and their

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[161] Collins, *First Corinthians*, 547.

[162] Martinus C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5*, JSNTSup 22 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 115.

[163] Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1235.

[164] For a complete list of references see Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 105. I am also indebted for Dunn's work on the identity of the "powers" in Pauline literature. I closely follow his argument here. See, idem., 105–110.

intervention is hostile towards creation. It would be difficult to identify these "powers"

specifically in 1 Cor 15:24–25 as the Roman Empire. Note that Paul is calling to mind the

intended cosmic order of God which is brought to perfection in Christ. Those forces which

interfere with God's cosmic order are not human entities. Rather as seen in 1 Corinthians, and

similarly in Romans, the entrance of sin into the κόσμος not only intervenes in God's intended

plans but has subjected creation to "futility" (ματαιότης) (cf. Rom 8:18-22). The "powers" and

"authorities" are cosmic forces which have "enslaved" humanity (cf. Gal 4:111). Christ becomes

victorious over all cosmic powers and death is the final enemy of humankind.[165]

If we take Paul's language at face-value, then Paul categorizes humanity as those who are

being saved and those who are perishing. Rome, therefore, is part of the realm which is

perishing. To make this point is not to insist that Paul is suggesting the active political

subversion of Rome. Rome and all that which is not in Christ will ultimately fade away. This

does not negate the notion that Paul could see Roman power as opposed to God. In fact, many

aspects of Roman power could be seen in the category of the κόσμος, that which is under the

control of sin and death. Paul could recognize aspects of Roman power as incompatible with the

reign of God. But Paul was not opposed to Rome in such explicit language. He did not directly

call for a radical subversion of the empire. It therefore becomes difficult to make a claim that

Paul fostered an anti-imperial rhetoric. One can conclude this discussion with the insights of

John M.G. Barclay. He observes, "[Paul's] stance towards the Roman empire is neither simple

opposition nor obedience: it is a field of human reality cross-crossed and contested (like all

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[165] Ibid., 230.

others) by the opposing forces of Flesh and Spirit and is subject to powers far greater than itself in the battle created by the gospel."[166]

Summary

Interpreters who takes Paul's theology to oppose the Roman Empire or 'imperial ideology' are often trapped within political categories created by Rome itself or by modern political commentators. When Paul makes distinctions, it is not a distinction between Jews and Greeks, slaves and free but rather between those who are in Christ and those who are not in Christ. As Barclay observes, "Paul sees no significant differences between Romans and Greeks, only a categorical distinction between κόσμος and καινὴ κτίσις which was created by the cross (Gal 6:14–15): in shattering other classifications of culture and power, the world is divided anew around the event of Christ."[167] Paul seeks to center his communities on a unified ethic in Christ, that by being "in Christ" they not only live in a *new creation* but live in a manner which is worthy of the gospel.

The kingdom of God is never directly opposed to the emperor's kingdom. The kingdom of God is, however, seeking to overthrow the sovereignty of sin by the reign of grace (Rom 5:12–21).[168] The kingdom of God reigns in order to destroy "every principality (ἀρχή), and every authority (ἐξουσία), and every power (δύναμις)" and to ultimately destroy "death" (θάνατος) (1 Cor 15:25, 26). "Powers" in Paul's letters are "comprehensive features of reality which penetrate

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[166] I am indebted to John M.G. Barclay for his insights on Paul's *political theology*, which I follow. See, idem., *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*, WUNT 275 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 383–387, at 386.

[167] Ibid., 384.

[168] Ibid.

(what we call) the 'political' sphere, but only as it is enmeshed in larger and more comprehensive force-fields."[169]

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to establish Paul's understanding of κόσμος, καινὴ κτίσις, and their relationship to humanity. The term κόσμος is often associated with connotations of "orderliness" and "beauty" with regard to the universe. Paul uses this term in two different ways in his letters. In 1 Corinthians, κόσμος is the created order but Paul regards it as *disorderly*. It becomes the realm of Satan, where sin and death are personified and reign over humanity.

In Romans, however, κόσμος maintains the connotations of "order" and "beauty" but, on account of Adam's sin, it has been subjected to futility. The κόσμος, therefore, is connected to the fate of humanity. Yet, through Christ's death and resurrection humanity and creation are being liberated from the cosmic forces of death and decay. Though the *new creation* has begun with Christ's death and resurrection, it will not culminate until the *Parousia*. As seen in Rom 8:18–22, the redemption promised to all creation (human and non-human) has begun but all creation (non-human) eagerly awaits the final redemption of the "children of God."

Humanity cannot escape this realm and therefore must live within a *new creation* inaugurated by the Christ-event. In this new reality, they not only walk by the Spirit but practice a life which is worthy of the gospel. In this way, despite the κόσμος, they will inherit resurrection because Christ defeated all cosmic powers (sin, death, decay), but also brought about the death of Death.

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[169] Ibid.

The Roman Empire, as well as every other political power and people, are not excluded from the scope of Christ's redemptive actions. Paul's preaching included the hope that all will be saved through Christ (cf. Rom 8:24). Though Paul's hope is the salvation of humanity, all of humanity does not recognize the salvation offered by God through Christ. If you are not "in Christ" then one is not being saved. If one remains outside of God's grace, they are perishing along with the cosmic forces of sin, death, and decay. At the eschaton all those entities "in Adam" will cease to be, leaving only the *new creation*. Yet hope remains that those "in Adam" (including the Roman Empire?) will be saved "in Christ."

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This dissertation has sought to explore post-colonial interpretations of the undisputed letters of

Paul. Some post-colonial interpreters of Paul suggest that Paul, either openly or covertly,

criticized the Roman Empire. Some commentators even suggest that Paul sought a political

subversion of sorts. The most recent collection of post-colonial interpretations of Paul, three

volumes of essays edited by Richard Horsley, has brought great attention to this subject.[1] These

volumes, and more recent publications, grew as a result of the Society of Biblical Literature's

section on Paul and Politics which has been an ongoing consultation between several scholars for

several decades.[2] The increased influence of these political readings of Paul has emerged within

the last few decades. It is necessary, therefore, to take political readings of Paul seriously

because of the anti-imperial claims made by many post-colonial interpreters.

This study is a rhetorical, sociopolitical, and theological reading of Paul's letters. It has

argued that, while Paul wrote in a predominantly Greco-Roman and Jewish environment, he was

little concerned with *politics* as such. Paul's thought should not be confined under the category

of *political* or *apolitical*. Paul's thought, however, should be understood in the context of his

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[1] Richard Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in the Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997); Idem., *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretations: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000); Idem., *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004).

[2] See the most recent collection of essays published by the SBL on empire studies in the New Tesament; Adam Winn, ed., *An Introduction to Empire in the New Testament* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016).

preaching. Namely, Paul preached the gospel of Christ in contexts of κόσμος and καινὴ κτίσις. I have attempted to show that Paul did not directly or covertly support or undermine the Roman Empire. Instead, his dealings with the empire were more nuanced than some may claim. Consequently, for Paul, you were either among those "being saved" or those "perishing;" you are either "in Christ" or "in Adam." Rome, along with all other things not "in Christ" will eventually fade away leaving only the *new creation* in Christ. Though Paul wrote in a society heavily influenced by the Roman Empire, I have argued that the empire has remarkably little role in Paul's eschatological soteriology.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

The five chapters of this dissertation have sought to understand Paul's letters rhetorically, socio-politically, and theologically.

Chapter One focuses on the state of the question. Several scholars have located in Paul's undisputed letters a direct challenge to the authority of the emperor and/or the Roman Empire. Two larger issues appear in this discussion: first is the notion that Paul used terms which were first used for the emperor, for Christ. The use of parallel terminology, thereby, undermined the emperor's authority. In a world which was heavily influenced by the imperial cult, Paul's use of parallel terms seems divisive; the second issue is Paul incorporated *coded speech* in his letters. This allowed his readers to understand his subversive claims about Rome, but if the letter was intercepted by the Roman authority, his *hidden transcript* would go unnoticed.

In my analysis of these arguments, I contended that these claims were misplaced on several accounts. First, the notion that the imperial cult was a ubiquitous phenomenon across the empire is much exaggerated. Archaeological evidence suggests that even after an emperor, or

member of the imperial family, was divinized they were not on par with the Olympian gods. Second, parallel terminology, found in Roman propaganda, which Paul "incorporates" into his letters does not take into account Paul's own background. Paul, a Hellenized Jew preached Christ as the fulfillment of Jewish scriptures. If Rome took seriously Paul's Jewishness, as we should, then it will not strike us as odd that Paul neither addresses the emperor as "god," or "lord." But in the tradition of Jewish scripture, Paul can understand the imperial authority as divinely ordained. Finally, the argument for hidden transcripts takes special pleading after previous arguments fall short of their goal. Paul very openly proclaims the gospel of Christ and does not seem to hide this information. Paul's letters were not public discourses, but private documents written to particular communities. Each letter contained specific information pertaining only to that community, hence Paul's openness towards them. If Paul spoke in code, then why would he insist on the lordship of Christ? If he spoke in code, why would he openly admit that some in the household of Caesar accepted the gospel (Phil 4:22)? To further my argument that Paul did not incorporate hidden transcripts to undermine Rome, I took on a rhetorical critical investigation of those passages where some scholars claim Paul spoke in code against the empire.

Chapter Two specifically focuses on the notion of *figured speech* in Paul's rhetoric. If Paul incorporated hidden transcripts into his letters, Paul would be using a rhetorical device called *figured speech*. Figured speech is the rhetorical device where a person says one thing but means another. Of the three main categories of figured speech, ἔμφασις, πλάγιον, and ἐναντίον, ἔμφασις (implied meaning) is the only category which could be used in cases of propriety and in circumstances when it was unsafe to openly speak. Of the several methods for detecting ἔμφασις in speech, the two most prominent methods which are argued for Paul's use of hidden transcripts

are audience-dependent irony and *aposiopesis*. Audience-dependent irony is when the historical

content of the text supplies the reader with the irony at play. Normally, this would be hinted at

within the text by short phrases, leaving the audience to turn the intentionally ambiguous into the

politically allusive. Ἔμφασις can also be detected by *aposiopesis*; when an expression is omitted,

which is usually made known by an abrupt stop in the sentence. Of the three passages which

scholars suggest contain *hidden transcripts*, 1 Thess 2:13–16, Phil 3, Rom 13:1–7, there is no

indication that Paul incorporated figured speech into those passages.

A rhetorical critical analyzation of these passages has brought me to believe that Paul did

not use figured speech to attack the empire. Furthermore, because of Paul's Jewishness, it should

seem awkward to suggest Paul would want to subvert the empire in his letters. Though Jews and

Romans did not have a perfect relationship, they did have a mutual understanding where, more

often than not, Rome respected the rights of the Jews to worship. For Paul, a Jew, to say that that

the emperor is not "divine" would not be shocking. Conversely, for Paul, and any other Jew, to

honor a pagan king or emperor was not out of the ordinary. The civil authority has their power

because God has ordained it as such. Therefore, by revering their civil authorities, believers are

ultimately honoring God (Rom 13:1–7).

Chapter Three contextualized the civic situation of Paul, by understanding how Rome

functioned as a political power in the first century BCE – first century CE. This chapter also

considered Rome's relationship to foreign cults. Rome considered itself as the preeminent

political world power in the first-century CE and this was only accentuated by Augustus's rise to

power with the establishment of the principate.

Because Rome understood its place in the world as unique, it sought to preserve itself as that unique power. Rome considered itself as culturally superior. Foreigners and their cults were expected to assimilate to Roman culture. In this way, non-Roman cults became more tolerable by the authorities. Rome allowed outsiders to worship freely as long as Rome was not undermined. The only situations when Rome intervened against foreign cults was when those cults were perceived to threaten, politically or otherwise, the republic/empire. The cult of Bacchus, of Isis, and of Yahweh were tolerated insofar as they were not perceived as threatening. But when they were perceived to be of some threat, they were suppressed on a local level. Regarding the Pauline communities, how should one understand Paul's relationship to the greater Greco-Roman world? Paul was Jewish, but his communities did not associate with the synagogues of the Jews. Paul did recognize as and named his communities ἐκκλησίαι. Moreover, he likely understood his relationship to the wider Greco-Roman world as a positive one, rather than a negative one.

Chapter Four of this study has attempted to show that Paul's identification of his communities as the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ derived partly from his understanding of Greco-Roman voluntary associations. Paul's ἐκκλησίαι, Jewish associations, and Greco-Roman voluntary associations have significant parallels since they all developed within similar civic contexts. Yet, unlike Greco-Roman voluntary associations, Pauline assemblies were unique insofar as he called his communities to live in a manner which was worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil 1:27). The general function of a voluntary association was sociability among membership while, simultaneously, worshipping the associations patron deity. It included peoples of varied social status and all members benefited from engaging in their associations. Pauline assemblies, though

similar, established a new way of life. Christ believers, just like Greco-Romans in voluntary associations, had to follow their ethical bylaws when they gathered. But unlike voluntary associations, Paul's associations offered a new way of life which promised physical and spiritual transformation. To join a Pauline assembly, the ἐκκλησία, meant that you accepted the gospel of Christ which had social and ethical ramifications. You now lived in a manner worthy of the gospel. To be a part of the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ meant that you were empowered by the Holy Spirit and you were to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16; cf. Rom 8:4). According to Paul, the Spirit sanctifies and transforms the life of the believer.

As a result of my research, Chapter Five concluded that Paul was not concerned with the place of the Roman Empire in his eschatological soteriology. I attempted to show, however, that Paul understood the universe in terms of κόσμος or καινὴ κτίσις; "in Adam" or "in Christ." Paul categorizes humanity as those who are being saved or those who are perishing. Those who are saved exist in the *new creation*, which was inaugurated by the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. In the *new creation*, believers live in a new reality. Empowered by the Spirit of God, believers not only practice a life of virtue within and outside their local ἐκκλησία but are promised eternal life and resurrection from the dead. Those who are perishing, however, are enslaved to the cosmic powers of sin, death, and decay. Paul, therefore, unifies his community under a common ethic; to live a life worthy of the gospel of Christ. This *new reality* will preserve them from enslavement to the cosmic forces of sin, death, and decay.

Though Rome is never directly mentioned in Paul's letters, it is part of the fading κόσμος. To reiterate, Paul does not make a distinction between Jews and Greeks, or slaves and free, only between those being saved in Christ and those who are perishing. God's kingdom wages war

against the cosmic forces of sin, death, and decay. The enemies in Paul's letters are the cosmic forces of sin and death who seek to enslave humanity, and all non-human creation, under their power. But Christ, at the eschaton, will not only permanently liberate all creation from these forces but will put Death to death.

Implications for Further study

This study examines Paul's relationship to his greater Greco-Roman environment. In light of his Hellenistic Jewish backgrounds as well as his training in Greek rhetoric, one may reach the conclusion that Paul was comfortable insofar as he felt freedom in his ability to preach the gospel of Christ. Though Paul depended on several areas of Greco-Roman culture (rhetoric, voluntary associations, etc.), they were only used in the service of his preaching. I am certainly not the first to make these arguments, but I think my argument further illuminate the issue of Paul and politics. This study has furthered the argument that Paul did not seek to subvert the Roman Empire.

The discussion of Paul and politics has been limited to the undisputed letters. It is my suspicion that Paul's eschatological-soteriology, for the most part, is carried over into the deutero-Pauline letters. Do these letters reflect a similar attitude, as I argued, towards the governing authority? Though Rom 13 is the only explicit passage about civil authorities in the Pauline tradition, do the other Pauline letters exhibit a similar eschatological soteriology which is expressed in terms of κόσμος and/or κτίσις (cf. Eph 2:14–18; 4:20–24; Col 3:9–11)?

With regard to the general letters, the Petrine tradition carries not only language of κόσμος but also language about honoring "the emperor" (1 Pet 2:17)! A rhetorical and sociopolitical analysis of this letter will prove helpful in Empire and New Testament studies.

Most importantly, I think recent post-colonial interpretations of Paul have misplaced the focus of their interpretive efforts. Post-colonial criticism, though it seeks to locate "empire" in the texts, can often overshadow the voice of the margelinzed. I think colonial readings should also attempt to open constructive pathways of enhancing human dignity and freedom. Yet, as discussed in Chapter Two, the emphasis in much of Pauline post-colonial interpretation is on subversion and political upheaval. Though arguments of Paul as an anti-imperial *hero* is a valid claim, I think, however, a claim regarding Paul as a *hero* for the marginalized and the oppressed is just as valid. Paul preaches salvation for all people, namely, that Christ has shattered all boundaries; "for all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ" (1 Cor 15:22; cf. 1 Tim 2:4). All are unified because of Christ (Gal 3:28). A post-colonial study of Paul's inclusive preaching will do great justice both to Paul and to our current culture, which continues to marginalize the most vulnerable people of our world.

This study takes seriously the rhetorical, sociopolitical, and theological background of Paul. This dissertation aimed to answer, "what is Paul thinking?" and "how is Paul's theology a reflection of the *world* in which he lives?" I have sought to answer this question not only by trying to understand Paul's rhetoric, but also how the gospel of Christ shaped his mind. In many ways, to ask about the *authorial intent* of any writer, especially ancient writers, is a most difficult question and most problematic. Yet, examination will help illuminate important nuances which, until now, have not received close enough attention. It is my hope that this study will advance the argument for Paul's understanding of *self* and *identity* in a world which is so distant from our present. I hope that it may be a helpful model for further positive interpretations of Biblical Literature.

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Beyond his academic studies, Haddad is an active member of the Melkite Catholic Church. Having served two consecutive terms as chair of their diocesan young adults group, he continues to assist in organizing religious retreats. Haddad currently resides in Illinois.